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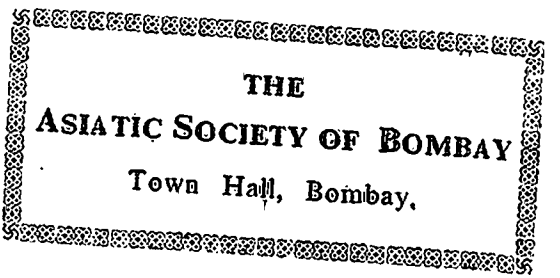

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THE

ORLANDO FURIOSO

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

FROM THE ITALIAN OF

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO

WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE

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THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Medoro, by Angelica's quaint hand,
Is healed, and weds, and bears her to Cutay.
At length Marphisa, with the chosen band,
After long suffering, makes Laiazzi's bay.
Guido the savage, bondsman in the land,
Which impious women rule with evil sway,
With bold Marphisa strives in single fight,
And lodges her and hers at fall of night.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XIX.

I.

By whom he is beloved can no one know,
Who on the top of Fortune's wheel is seated [1];
Since he, by true and faithless friends, with show
Of equal faith, in glad estate is greeted.
But, should felicity be changed to woe,
The flattering multitude is turned and fleeted!
While he who loves his master from his heart,
Even after death performs his faithful part.

II.

Were the heart seen as is the outward cheer,
He who at court is held in sovereign grace,
And he that to his lord is little dear,
With parts reversed, would fill each other's place;
The humble man the greater would appear,
And he, now first, be hindmost in the race.
But be Medoro's faithful story said,
The youth who loved his lord, alive or dead.

III.

The closest path, amid the forest gray,
To save himself, pursued the youth forlorn;
But all his schemes were marred by the delay
Of that sore weight upon his shoulders born.
The place he knew not, and mistook the way,
And hid himself again in sheltering thorn.
Secure and distant was his mate, that through
The greenwood-shade with lighter shoulders flew.

IV.

So far was Cloridan advanced before,
He heard the boy no longer in the wind;
But when he marked the absence of Medore,
It seemed as if his heart was left behind.
"Ah! how was I so negligent," (the Moor
Exclaimed,) "so far beside myself, and blind,
"That I, Medoro, should without thee fare,
"Nor know when I deserted thee or where?"

V.

So saying, in the wood he disappears,
Plunging into the maze with hurried pace;
And thither, whence he lately issued, steers,
And, desperate, of death returns in trace.
Cries and the tread of steeds this while he hears,
And word and threat of foemen, as in chase:
Lastly Medoro by his voice is known,
Disarmed, on foot, 'mid many horse, alone.

VI.

A hundred horsemen who the youth surround,
Zerbino leads, and bids his followers seize
The stripling: like a top, the boy turns round
And keeps him as he can: among the trees,
Behind oak, elm, beech, ash, he takes his ground,
Nor from the cherished load his shoulders frees.
Wearied, at length, the burden he bestowed
Upon the grass, and stalked about his load.

VII.

As in her rocky cavern the she-bear,
With whom close warfare Alpine hunters wage,
Uncertain hangs about her shaggy care,
And growls in mingled sound of love and rage.
To unsheath her claws, and blood her tushes bare,
Would natural hate and wrath the beast engage;
Love softens her, and bids from strife retire,
And for her offspring watch, amid her ire.

VIII.

Cloridan who to aid him knows not how,
And with Medoro willingly would die,
But who would not for death his being forego,
Until more foes than one should lifeless lie,
Ambushed, his sharpest arrow to his bow
Fits, and directs it with so true an eye,
The feathered weapon bores a Scotchman's brain,
And lays the warrior dead upon the plain.

IX.

Together, all the others of the band
Turned thither, whence was shot the murderous reed;
Meanwhile he launched another from his stand,
That a new foe might by the weapon bleed,
Whom (while he made of *this* and *that* demand,
And loudly questioned who had done the deed)
The arrow reached—transfixed the wretch's throat,
And cut his question short in middle note.

X.

Zerbino, captain of those horse, no more
Can at the piteous sight his wrath refrain;
In furious heat, he springs upon Medore,
Exclaiming, "Thou of this shalt bear the pain."
One hand he in his locks of golden ore
Enwreaths, and drags him to himself amain;
But, as his eyes that beauteous face survey,
Takes pity on the boy, and does not slay.

XI.

To him the stripling turns, with suppliant cry,
And, "By thy God, sir knight," exclaims, "I pray,
"Be not so passing cruel, nor deny
"That I in earth my honoured king may lay:
"No other grace I supplicate, nor I
"This for the love of life, believe me, say.
"So much, no longer, space of life I crave,
"As may suffice to give my lord a grave.

XII.

" And if you needs must feed the beast and bird,
" Like Theban Creon[9], let their worst be done
" Upon these limbs; so that by me interred
" In earth be those of good Almontes' son."
Medoro thus his suit, with grace, preferred,
And words—to move a mountain; and so won
Upon Zerbino's mood, to kindness turned,
With love and pity he all over burned.

XIII.

This while, a churlish horseman of the band,
Who little deference for his lord confest,
His lance uplifting, wounded overhand
The unhappy suppliant in his dainty breast.
Zerbino, who the cruel action scanned,
Was deeply stirred, the rather that, opprest
And livid with the blow the churl had sped,
Medoro fell as he was wholly dead.

XIV.

So grieved Zerbino, with such wrath was stung,
" Not unavenged shalt thou remain," he cries;
Then full of evil will in fury sprung
Upon the author of the foul emprize.
But he his vantage marks, and, from among
The warriors, in a moment slips and flies.
Cloridan who beholds the deed, at sight
Of young Medoro's fall, springs forth to fight;

XV.

And casts away his bow, and, 'mid the band
Of foemen, whirls his falchion, in desire
Rather of death, than hoping that his hand
May snatch a vengeance equal to his ire.
Amid so many blades, he views the sand
Tinged with his blood, and ready to expire,
And feeling he the sword no more can guide,
Lets himself drop by his Medoro's side.

XVI.

The Scots pursue their chief, who pricks before,
Through the deep wood, inspired by high disdain,
When he has left the one and the other Moor,
This dead, *that* scarce alive, upon the plain.
There for a mighty space lay young Medore,
Spouting his life-blood from so large a vein,
He would have perished, but that thither made
A stranger, as it chanced, who lent him aid.

XVII.

By chance arrived a damsel at the place,
Who was (though mean and rustic was her wear)
Of royal presence and of beauteous face,
And lofty manners, sagely debonair:
Her have I left unsung so long a space,
That you will hardly recognise the fair.
Angelica, in her (if known not) scan,
The lofty daughter of Catay's great khan.

XVIII.

Angelica, when she had won again
The ring Brunello had from her conveyed,
So waxed in stubborn pride and haught disdain,
She seemed to scorn this ample world, and strayed
Alone, and held as cheap each living swain,
Although, amid the best, by Fame arrayed:
Nor brooked she to remember a galant
In Count Orlando or king Sacripant;

XIX.

And above every other deed repented,
That good Rinaldo she had loved of yore;
And that to look so low she had consented,
(As by such choice dishonoured) grieved her sore.
Love, hearing this, such arrogance resented,
And would the damsel's pride endure no more.
Where young Medoro lay he took his stand,
And waited her, with bow and shaft in hand.

XX.

When fair Angelica the stripling spies,
Nigh hurt to death in that disastrous fray,
Who for his king, that there unsheltered lies,
More sad than for his own misfortune lay,
She feels new pity in her bosom rise,
Which makes its entry in unwonted way.
Touched was her haughty heart, once hard and curst,
And more when he his piteous tale rehearsed.

XXI.

And calling back to memory her art,
For she in Ind had learned chirurgery,
(Since it appears such studies in that part
Worthy of praise and fame are held to be[3],
And, as an heir-loom, sires to sons impart,
With little aid of books, the mystery)
Disposed herself to work with simples' juice,
Till she in him should healthier life produce;

XXII.

And recollects a herb had caught her sight
In passing hither, on a pleasant plain.
What (whether dittany or pancy hight)[4]
I know not; fraught with virtue to restrain
The crimson blood forth-welling, and of might
To sheathe each perilous and piercing pain,
She found it near, and having pulled the weed,
Returned to seek Medoro on the mead.

XXIII.

Returning, she upon a swain did light,
Who was on horseback passing through the wood.
Strayed from the lowing herd, the rustic wight
A heifer, missing for two days, pursued.
Him she with her conducted, where the might
Of the faint youth was ebbing with his blood:
Which had the ground about so deeply dyed,
Life was nigh wasted with the gushing tide.

XXIV.

Angelica alights upon the ground,
And he her rustic comrade, at her hest.
She hastened 'twixt two stones the herb to pound,
Then took it, and the healing juice exprest:
With this did she foment the stripling's wound,
And, even to the hips, his waist and breast;
And (with such virtue was the salve endued)
It stanched his life-blood, and his strength renewed;

XXV.

And into him infused such force again,
That he could mount the horse the swain conveyed;
But good Medoro would not leave the plain
Till he in earth had seen his master laid.
He, with the monarch, buried Cloridane,
And after followed whither pleased the maid,
Who was to stay with him, by pity led,
Beneath the courteous shepherd's humble shed.

XXVI.

Nor would the damsel quit the lowly pile
(So she esteemed the youth) till he was sound;
Such pity first she felt, when him erewhile
She saw outstretched and bleeding on the ground.
Touched by his mien and manners next, a file
She felt corrode her heart with secret wound;
She felt corrode her heart, and with desire,
By little and by little warmed, took fire.

XXVII.

The shepherd dwelt, between two mountains hoar,
In goodly cabin, in the greenwood-shade,
With wife and children; and, short time before,
The brent-new shed had builded in the glade.
Here of his griesly wound the youthful Moor
Was briefly healed by the Catayan maid;
But who in briefer space, a sorer smart
Than young Medoro's, suffered at her heart.

XXVIII.

A wound far wider and which deeper lies,
Now in her heart she feels, from viewless bow;
Which from the boy's fair hair and beauteous eyes
Had the winged archer dealt: a sudden glow
She feels, and still the flames increasing rise;
Yet less she heeds her own than other's woe:
—Heeds not herself, and only to content
The author of her cruel ill is bent.

XXIX.

Her ill but festered and increased the more
The stripling's wounds were seen to heal and close:
The youth grew lusty, while she suffered sore,
And, with new fever parched, now burnt, now froze;
From day to day in beauty waxed Medore:
She miserably wasted; like the snow's
Unseasonable flake, which melts away
Exposed, in sunny place, to scorching ray.

XXX.

She, if of vain desire she will not die,
Must help herself, nor yet delay the aid.
And she in truth, her will to satisfy,
Deemed 'twas no time to wait till she was prayed.
And next of shame renouncing every tye,
With tongue as bold as eyes, petition made,
And begged him, haply an unwitting foe,
To sheathe the suffering of that cruel blow.

XXXI.

O Count Orlando, O king of Circassy,
Say what your valour has availed to you[5]!
Say what your honour boots, what goodly fee
Remunerates ye both, for service true!
Sirs, show me but a single courtesy,
With which she ever graced ye,—old or new,—
As some poor recompense, desert, or guerdon,
For having born so long so sore a burden!

XXXII.

Oh! couldst thou yet again to life return,
How hard would this appear, O Agricane[6]!
In that she whilom thee was wont to spurn,
With sharp repulse and insolent disdain.
O Ferraû, O ye thousand more, forlorn,
Unsung, who wrought a thousand feats in vain
For this ungrateful fair, what pain 'twould be
Could you within his arms the damsel see!

XXXIII.

To pluck, as yet untouched, the virgin rose,
Angelica permits the young Medore.
Was none so blest as in that garden's close
Yet to have set his venturous foot before[7].
They holy ceremonies interpose,
Somedeal to veil—to gild—the matter o'er.
Young Love was bridesman there the tie to bless,
And for brideswoman stood the shepherdess.

XXXIV.

In the low shed, with all solemnities,
The couple made their wedding as they might;
And there above a month, in tranquil guise,
The happy lovers rested in delight.
Save for the youth the lady has no eyes,
Nor with his looks can satisfy her sight.
Nor yet of hanging on his neck can tire,
Or feel she can content her fond desire.

XXXV.

The beauteous boy is with her, night and day
Does she untent herself, or keep the shed.
Morning or eve they to some meadow stray,
Now to this bank, and to that other led:
Haply, in cavern harboured, at mid-day,
Grateful as that to which Æneas fled
With Dido, when the tempest raged above,
The faithful witness to their secret love.

XXXVI.

Amid such pleasures, where, with tree o'ergrown,
Ran stream, or bubbling fountain's wave did spin,
On bark or rock, if yielding were the stone,
The knife was straight at work or ready pin.
And there, without, in thousand places lone,
And in as many places graved, within,
MEDORO and ANGELICA were traced,
In divers cyphers quaintly interlaced.

XXXVII.

When she believed they had prolonged their stay
More than enow, the damsel made design
In India to revisit her Catày,
And with its crown Medoro's head entwine.
She had upon her wrist an armlet, gay
With costly gems, in witness and in sign
Of love to her by Count Orlando borne,
And which the damsel for long time had worn.

XXXVIII.

On Ziliantes, hid beneath the wave,
This Morgue bestowed[8]; and from captivity
The youth (restored to Monodante's grave,
His ancient sire, through Roland's chivalry)
To Roland in return the bracelet gave:
Roland, a lover, deigned the gorgeous fee
To wear, with the intention to convey
The present to his queen, of whom I say.

XXXIX.

No love which to the paladin she bears,
But that it costly is and wrought with care,
This to Angelica so much endears,
That never more esteemed was matter rare:
This she was suffered, in THE ISLE OF TEARS,
I know not by what privilege, to wear,
When, naked, to the whale exposed for food
By that inhospitable race and rude.

XL.

She, not possessing wherewithal to pay
The kindly couple's hospitality,
Served by them in their cabin, from the day
She there was lodged, with such fidelity,
Unfastened from her arm the bracelet gay,
And bade them keep it for her memory.
Departing hence the lovers climb the side
Of hills, which fertile France from Spain divide.

XLI.

Within Valencia or Barcelona's town
The couple thought a little to remain,
Until some goodly ship should make her boun
To loose for the Levant: as so the twain
Journey, beneath Gerona,—coming down
Those mountains—they behold the subject main;
And keeping on their left the beach below,
By beaten track to Barcelona go.

XLII.

But, ere they there arrive, a crazed wight
They find, extended on the outer shore;
Who is bedaubed like swine, in filthy plight,
And smeared with mud, face, reins, and bosom o'er;
He comes upon them, as a dog in spite
Swiftly assails the stranger at the door;
And is about to do the lovers scorn.
But to the bold Marphisa I return—

XLIII.

Marphisa, Astolpho, Gryphon, Aquilant.
Of these and of the others will I tell:
Who, death before their eyes, the vext Levant
Traverse, and ill resist the boisterous swell.
While aye more passing proud and arrogant,
Waxes in rage and threat the tempest fell.
And now three days the angry gale has blown,
Nor signal of abatement yet has shown.

XLIV.

Waves lifted by the waxing tempest start
Castle and flooring[9], and, if yet there be
Aught standing left in any other part,
'Tis cut away and cast into the sea.
Here, pricking out their course upon the chart,
One by a lantern does his ministry,
Upon a sea-chest propt; another wight
Is busied in the well by torch's light.

XLV.

This one beneath the poop, beneath the prow
That other, stands to watch the ebbing sand;
And (each half-glass run out) returns to know
What way the ship has made, and towards what land.
Thence all to speak their different thoughts, below,
To midships make resort, with chart in hand;
There where the mariners, assembled all,
Are met in council, at the master's call.

XLVI.

One says; "Abreast of Limissò are we
"Among the shoals"—and by his reckoning, nigh
The rocks of Tripoli the bark must be,
Where shipwrecked, for the most part, vessels lie.
Another; "We are lost on Sataly[10],
"Whose coast makes many patrons weep and sigh."
According to their judgment, all suggest
Their reasons, each with equal dread opprest.

XLVII.

More spitefully the wind on the third day
Blows, and the sea more yeasty billows rears:
The fore-mast by the first is borne away,
The rudder by the last, with him who steers.
Better than steel that man will bide the assay,
—Of marble breast—who has not now his fears.
Marphisa, erst so confident 'mid harms,
Denied not but that day she felt alarms.

XLVIII.

A pilgrimage is vowed to Sinäi,
To Cyprus and Gallicia, and to Rome,
Ettino, and other place of sanctity[11],
If such is named, and to the holy tomb.
Meanwhile, above the sea and near the sky,
The bark is tost, with shattered plank and boom;
From which the crew had cut, in her distress,
The mizenmast, to make her labour less.

XLIX.

They bale and chest and all their heavy lumber
Cast overboard, from poop, and prow, and side;
And every birth and cabin disencumber
Of merchandize, to feed the greedy tide.
Water to water others of the number
Rendered[12], by whom the spouting pumps were plied.
This in the hold bestirs himself, where'er
Planks opened by the beating sea appear.

L.

They in this trouble, in this woe, remained
For full four days; and helpless was their plight,
And a full victory the sea had gained,
If yet a little had endured its spite:
But them with hope of clearer sky sustained
The wished appearance of St. Elmo's light[13],
Which (every spar was gone) descending glowed
Upon a boat, which in the prow was stowed.

LI.

When, flaming, they the beauteous light surveyed,
All those aboard kneeled down in humble guise,
And Heaven for peace and for smooth water prayed,
With trembling voices and with watery eyes.
Nor longer waxed the storm, which had dismayed,
Till then enduring in such cruel wise.
North-wester or cross-wind no longer reigns;
But tyrant of the sea the south remains.

LII.

This on the sea remained so passing strong,
And from its sable mouth so fiercely blew,
And bore with it so swift a stream and strong
Of the vext waters, that it hurried through
Their tumbling waves the shattered bark along,
Faster than gentle falcon ever flew;
And sore the patron feared, to the world's brink
It would transport his bark, or wreck or sink.

LIII.

For this the master finds a remedy,
Who bids them cast out spars, and veer away
A line which holds this float, and as they flee,
So, by two-thirds, their furious course delay.
This counsel boots, and more the augury
From him whose lights upon the gunwale play[14].
This saves the vessel, haply else undone;
And makes her through the sea securely run.

LIV.

They, driven on Syria, in Laiazzo's bay
A mighty city rise[15]; so nigh at hand,
That they can from the vessel's deck survey
Two castles, which the port within command.
Pale turns the patron's visage with dismay,
When he perceives what is the neighbouring land,
Who will not to the port for shelter hie,
Nor yet can keep the open sea, nor fly.

LV.

They cannot fly, nor yet can keep the sea;
For mast and yards are gone, and by the stroke
Of the huge billows beating frequently,
Loosened is plank, and beam and timber broke:
And certain death to make the port would be,
Or to be doomed to a perpetual yoke.
For each is made a slave, or sentenced dead,
Thither by evil Chance or Error led.

LVI.

Sore dangerous 'twas to doubt; lest hostile band
Should sally from the puissant town in sight,
With armed barks, and upon theirs lay hand,
In evil case for sea, and worse for fight.
What time the patron knows not what command
To give, of him inquires the English knight*,
'What kept his mind suspended in that sort,
'And why at first he had not made the port[16].'

* Astolpho.

LVII.

To him relates the patron, ‘ how a crew
‘ Of murderous women tenanted that shore,
‘ Which, by their ancient law, enslaved or slew
‘ All those whom Fortune to this kingdom bore;
‘ And that *he* only could such lot eschew
‘ That in the lists ten champions overbore,
‘ And having this achieved, the following night
‘ In bed should with ten damsels take delight.

LVIII.

And if he brings to end the former feat,
‘ But afterwards the next unfinished leaves,
‘ They kill him, and as slaves his following treat,
‘ Condemned to delve their land or keep their beeves.
‘ —If for the first and second labour meet—
‘ He liberty for all his band achieves,
‘ Not for himself; who there must stay and wed
‘ Ten wives by him selected for his bed.’

LIX.

So strange a custom of the neighbouring strand
Without a laugh Astolpho cannot hear;
Sansonet and Marphisa, near at hand,
Next Aquilant, and he, his brother dear,
Arrive: to them the patron who from land
Aye keeps aloof, explains the cause of fear,
And cries; “ I liefer in the sea would choke,
“ Than here of servitude endure the yoke.”

LX.

The sailors by the patron's rede abide,
And all the passengers affrighted sore;
Save that Marphisa took the other side
With hers, who deemed that safer was the shore
Than sea, which raging round them, far and wide,
Than a hundred thousand swords dismayed them more.
Them little this, or other place alarms,
So that they have but power to wield their arms.

LXI.

The warriors are impatient all to land:
But boldest is of these the English peer;
Knowing how soon his horn will clear the strand,
When the scared foe its pealing sound shall hear.
To put into the neighbouring port this band
Desires, and are at strife with those who fear.
And they who are the strongest, in such sort
Compel the patron, that he makes the port.

LXII.

Already when their bark was first espied
At sea, within the cruel city's view,
They had observed a galley, well supplied
With practised mariners and numerous crew
(While them uncertain counsels did divide)
Make for their wretched ship, the billows through:
Her lofty prow to their short stern and low
These lash, and into port the vessel tow.

LXIII.

They thitherward were worked with warp and oar,
Rather than with assistance of the sail;
Since to lay starboard course or larboard more,
No means were left them by the cruel gale.
Again their rugged rhind the champions wore,
Girding the faithful falchion with the mail,
And with unceasing hope of comfort fed
Master and mariners opprest with dread.

LXIV.

Like a half-moon[17], projected from the beach,
More than four miles about, the city's port;
Six hundred paces deep; and crowning each
Horn of the circling haven, was a fort;
On every side, secure from storm or breach,
(Save only from the south), a safe resort.
In guise of theatre the town extended
About it, and a hill behind ascended.

LXV.

No sooner there the harboured ship was seen
(The news had spread already through the land)
Than thitherward, with martial garb and mien,
Six thousand women trooped, with bow in hand;
And, to remove all hope of flight, between
One castle and the other, drew a band;
And with strong chains and barks the port enclosed;
Which ever, for that use, they kept disposed.

LXVI.

A dame, as the Cumean sybil gray,
Or Hĕctor's ancient mother of renown,
Made call the patron out, and bade him say,
' If they their lives were willing to lay down;
' Or were content beneath the yoke to stay,
' According to the custom of the town.
—' One of two evils they must choose,—be slain,
' Or captives, one and all, must there remain.'

LXVII.

" 'Tis true, if one so bold and of such might
" Be found amid your crew," (the matron said),
" That he ten men of ours engage in fight,
" And can in cruel battle lay them dead,
" And, after, with ten women, in one night,
" Suffice to play the husband's part in bed,
" He shall remain our sŏvereign, and shall sway
" The land, and you may homeward wend your way.

LXVIII.

" And at *your* choĭce to stay shall also be,
" Whether a part or all, but with this pact,
" That he who here would stay and would be free,
" Can with ten dames the husband's part enact.
" But if your chosen warrior fall or flee,
" By his ten enemies at once attacked,
" Or for the second function have not breath,
" To slavery you we doom, and him to death."

LXIX.

At what she deemed the cavaliers would start,
The beldam found them bold; for to compete
With those they should engage, and play their part
The champions hoped alike in either feat.
Nor failed renowned Marphisa's valiant heart,
Albeit for the second dance unmeet;
Secure, where nature had her aid denied,
The want should with the falchion be supplied.

LXX.

The patron is commanded their reply
Resolved in common council to unfold;
'The dames at pleasure may their prowess try,
'And shall in lists and bed allow them bold.'
The lashings from the vessels they untie,
The skipper heaves the warp, and bids lay hold,
And lowers the bridge; o'er which, in warlike weed,
The expectant cavaliers their coursers lead.

LXXI.

These through the middle of the city go,
And see the damsels, as they forward fare,
Ride through the streets, succinct, in haughty show,
And arm, in guise of warriors, in the square.
Nor to gird sword, nor fasten spur below,
Is man allowed, nor any arm to wear;
Excepting, as I said, the ten; to follow
The ancient usage which those women hallow.

LXXII.

All others of the manly sex they seat,
To ply the distaff, broider, card and sow,
In female gown descending to the feet,
Which renders them effeminate and slow;
Some chained, another labour to complete,
Are tasked, to keep their cattle, or to plough.
Few are the males; and scarce the warriors ken,
Amid a thousand dames, a hundred men.

LXXIII.

The knights determining by lot to try
Who in their common cause on listed ground,
Should slay the ten, with whom they were to vie,
And in the other field ten others wound,
Designed to pass the bold Marphisa by,
Believing she unfitting would be found;
And would be, in the second joust at eve,
Ill-qualified the victory to achieve.

LXXIV.

But with the others she, the martial maid,
Will run her risque; and 'tis her destiny.
" I will lay down this life," the damsel said,
" Rather than you lay down your liberty.
" But *this*"—with that she pointed to the blade
Which she had girt—" is your security,
" I will all tangles in such manner loose,
" As Alexander did the Gordian noose.

LXXV.

" I will not henceforth stranger shall complain,
" So long as the world lasts, of this repair."
So said the maid, nor could the friendly train
Take from her what had fallen to her share.
Then,—either every thing to lose, or gain
Their liberty,—to her they leave the care.
With stubborn plate and mail all over steeled,
Ready for cruel fight, she takes the field.

LXXVI.

High up the spacious city is a place,
With steps, which serve as seats in rising rows;
Which for nought else is used, except the chase [18],
Tourney, or wrestling match, or such-like shows.
Four gates of solid bronze secure the space.
Thither of armed dames the rabble flows
In troubled tide; and to Marphisa bold,
That she may enter, afterwards is told.

LXXVII.

On pieballed horse Marphisa entered,—spread
Were circles dappling all about his hair,—
Of a bold countenance and little head,
And beauteous points, and haughty gait and air.
Out of a thousand coursers which he fed,
Him, as the best, and biggest, and most rare,
King Norandino chose, and, decked with brave
And costly trappings, to Marphisa gave [19].

LXXVIII.

Through the south gate, from the mid-day, the plain
Marphisa entered, nor expected long,
Before she heard approaching trumpet-strain
Peal through the lists in shrilling notes and strong;
And, looking next towards the northern wain,
Saw her ten opposites appear: among
These, as their leader, pricked a cavalier,
Excelling all the rest in goodly cheer.

LXXIX.

On a large courser came the leading foe,
Which was, excepting the near foot behind
And forehead, darker than was ever crow:
His foot and forehead with some white were signed.
The horseman did his horse's colours show
In his own dress; and hence might be divined,
He, as the mournful hue o'erpowered the clear,
Was less inclined to smile, than mournful tear.

LXXX.

At once their spears in rest nine warriors laid;
When the trump sounded, in the hostile train.
But he in black no sign of jousting made,
As if he held such vantage in disdain:
Better he deemed the law were disobeyed,
Than that his courtesy should suffer stain.
The knight retires apart, and sits to view
What against nine one single lance can do.

LXXXI.

Of smooth and balanced pace, the damsel's horse
To the encounter her with swiftness bore;
Who poised a lance so massive in the course,
It would have been an overweight for four.
She, disembarking, as of greatest force,
The boom had chosen out of many more.
At her fierce semblance when in motion, quail
A thousand hearts, a thousand looks grow pale.

LXXXII.

The bosom of the first she opens so,
As might surprise, if naked were the breast:
She pierced the cuirass and the mail below;
But first a buckler, solid and well prest.
A yard behind the shoulders of the foe
Was seen the steel, so well was it addrest.
Speared on her lance she left him on the plain,
And at the others drove with flowing rein;

LXXXIII.

And so she shocked the second of the crew,
And dealt the third so terrible a blow,
From sell and life, with broken spine, the two
She drove at once. So fell the overthrow,
And with such weight she charged the warriors through!
So serried was the battle of the foe!—
I have seen bombard open in such mode
The squadrons, as that band Marphisa strov. ed.

LXXXIV.

Many good spears were broken on the dame,
Who was as little moved as solid wall,
When revellers play the chace's merry game[21],
Is ever moved by stroke of heavy ball.
So hard the temper of her corslet's mail,
The strokes aye harmless on the breast-plate fall,
Whose steel was heated in the fires of hell,
And in Avernus' water slaked by spell.

LXXXV.

At the end of the career, she checked her steed,
Wheeled him about, and for a little stayed;
And then against the others drove at speed,
Broke them, and to the handle dyed her blade.
Here shorn of arms, and *there* of head, they bleed;
And other in such manner cleft the maid,
That breast, and head, and arms together fell,
Belly and legs remaining in the sell.

LXXXVI.

With such just measure him she cleaves, I say,
Where the two haunches and the ribs confine:
And leaves him a half figure, in such way
As what we before images divine,
Of silver, oftener made of wax, survey[22];
Which supplicants from far and near enshrine,
In thanks for mercy shown, and to bestow
A pious quittance for accepted vow.

LXXXVII.

Marphisa next made after one that flew,
And overtook the wretch, and cleft (before
He the mid-square had won) his collar through,
So clean, no surgeon ever pieced it more.
One after other, all in fine she slew,
Or wounded every one she smote so sore,
She was secure, that never more would foe
Arise anew from earth, to work her woe.

LXXXVIII.

The cavalier this while had stood aside,
Who had the ten conducted to the place,
Since, with so many against one to ride,
Had seemed to him advantage foul and base;
Who, now he by a single hand espied
So speedily his whole array displaced,
Pricked forth against the martial maid, to show
'Twas courtesy, not fear, had made him slow.

LXXXIX.

He, signing with his right hand, made appear
That he would speak ere their career was run,
Nor thinking that beneath such manly cheer
A gentle virgin was concealed, begun:
"I wot thou needs must be, sir cavalier,
"Sore wearied with such mighty slaughter done;
"And if I were disposed to weary thee
"More than thou art, it were discourtesy.

XC.

" To thee, to rest untill to-morrow's light,
" Then to renew the battle, I concede.
" No honour 'twere to-day to prove my might
" On thee, whom weak and overwrought I read."
—" Arms are not new to me, nor listed fight;
" Nor does fatigue so short a toil succeed,"
Answered Marphisa, " and I, at my post,
" Hope to prove this upon thee, to thy cost.

XCI.

" I thank thee for thy offer of delay,
" But need not what thy courtesy agrees;
" And yet remains so large a space of day
" 'Twere very shame to spend it all in ease."
—" Oh! were I (he replied) so sure to appay
" My heart with everything which best would please,
" As thine I shall appay in this!—but see,
" That ere thou thinkest, daylight fail not thee."

XCII.

So said he; and obedient to his hest
Two spears, say rather heavy booms, they bear.
He to Marphisa bids consign the best,
And the other takes himself: the martial pair
Already, with their lances in the rest,
Wait but till other blast the joust declare.
Lo! earth and air and sea the noise rebound,
As they prick forth, at the first trumpet's sound!

XCIII.

No mouth was opened and no eyelid fell,
Nor breath was drawn, amid the observant crew:
So sore intent was every one to spell
Which should be conqueror of the warlike two.
Marphisa the black champion from his sell,
So to o'erthrow he shall not rise anew,
Levels her lance; and the black champion, bent
To slay Marphisa, spurs with like intent.

XCIV.

Both lances, made of willow thin and dry,
Rather than stout and stubborn oak, appeared;
So splintered even to the rest, they fly:
While with such force the encountering steeds careered,
It seemed, as with a scythe-blade equally
The hams of either courser had been sheared.
Alike both fall; but voiding quick the seat,
The nimble riders start upon their feet.

XCV.

Marphisa in her life, with certain wound,
A thousand cavaliers on earth had laid;
And never had herself been borne to ground;
Yet quitted now the saddle, as was said.
Not only at the accident astound,
But nigh beside herself, remained the maid.
Strange to the sable cavalier withal,
Unwont to be unhorsed, appeared his fall.

XCVI.

They scarcely touch the ground before they gain
Their feet, and now the fierce assault renew,
With cut and thrust; which now with shield the twain
Or blade ward off, and now by leaps eschew.
Whether the foes strike home, or smite in vain,
Blows ring, and echo parted æther through.
More force those shields, those helms, those breast-plates show
Than anvils underneath the sounding blow.

XCVII.

If heavy falls the savage damsel's blade,
That falls not lightly of her warlike foe.
Equal the measure one the other paid;
And both receive as much as they bestow.
He who would see two daring spirits weighed,
To seek two fiercer need no further go.
Nor to seek more dexterity or might;
For greater could not be in mortal wight.

XCVIII.

The women who have sate long time, to view
The champions with such horrid strokes offend,
Nor sign of trouble in the warriors true
Behold, nor yet of weariness, commend
Them with just praises, as the worthiest two
That are, where'er the sea's wide arms extend.
They deem these of mere toil and labour long
Must die, save they be strongest of the strong.

XCIX.

Communing with herself, Marphisa said,
" That he moved not before was well for me!
" Who risqued to have been numbered with the dead,
" If he at first had joined his company.
" Since, as it is, I hardly can make head
" Against his deadly blows." This colloquy
She with herself maintained, and while she spoke,
Ceased not to ply her sword with circling stroke.

C.

" 'Twas well for me," the other cried again,
" That to repose I did not leave the knight.
" I now from him defend myself with pain,
" Who o'erwearied with the former fight:
" What had he been, renewed in might and main,
" If he had rested till to-morrow's light?
" Right fortunate was I, as man could be,
" That he refused my proffered courtesy!"

CI.

Till eve they strove, nor did it yet appear
Which had the vantage of the doubtful fray:
Nor, without light, could either foe see clear
How to avoid the furious blows: when day
Was done, again the courteous cavalier
To his illustrious opposite 'gan say;
" What shall we do, since ill-timed shades descend,
" While we with equal fortune thus contend?"

CII.

" Meseems, at least, that till to-morrow's morn
" 'Twere better thou prolonged thy life: no right
" Have I thy doom, sir warrior, to adjourn
" Beyond the limits of one little night.
" Nor will I that by me the blame be born
" That thou no longer shalt enjoy the light.
" With reason to the sex's charge, by whom
" This place is governed, lay thy cruel doom."

CIII.

" If I lament thee and thy company,
" He knows, by whom all hidden things are spied.
" Thou and thy comrades may repose with me,
" For whom there is no safe abode beside:
" Since leagued against you in conspiracy
" Are all whose husbands by thy hand have died.
" For every valiant warrior of the men
" Slain in the tourney, consort was of ten.

CIV.

" The scathe they have to-day received from thee,
" Would ninety women wreak with vengeful spite;
" And, save thou take my hospitality,
" Expect by them to be assailed this night."
—" I take thy proffer in security,"
(Replied Marphisa), " that the faith so plight,
" And goodness of thy heart, will prove no less,
" Than are thy corporal strength and hardiness.

CV.

" But if, as having to kill me, thou grieve,
" Thou well mayst grieve, for reasons opposite;
" Nor hast thou cause to laugh, as I conceive,
" Nor hitherto hast found me worst in fight.
" Whether thou wouldst defer the fray, or leave,
" Or prosecute by this or other light,
" Behold me prompt thy wishes to fulfil;
" Where and whenever it shall be thy will!"

CVI.

So by consent the combatants divided,
Till the dawn broke from Ganges' stream anew;
And so remained the question undecided,
Which was the better champion of the two.
To both the brothers* and the rest who sided
Upon that part, the liberal lord did sue
With courteous prayer, that till the coming day
They would be pleased beneath his roof to stay.

CVII.

They unsuspecting with the prayer complied,
And by the cheerful blaze of torches white
A royal dome ascended, with their guide,
Divided into many bowers and bright.
The combatants remain as stupified,
On lifting up their vizors, at the sight
One of the other; for (by what appears)
The warrior hardly numbers eighteen years.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

CVIII.

Much marvels with herself the gentle dame,
That one so young so well should do and dare.
Much marvels *he* (his wonderment the same)
When he her sex agnizes by her hair.
Questioning one another of their name,
As speedily reply the youthful pair.
But how was hight the youthful cavalier,
Await till the ensuing strain to hear.

NOTES TO CANTO XIX.

1.

By whom he is beloved can no one know,
Who on the top of Fortune's wheel is seated, &c.
Stanza i. lines 1 and 2.

It were long to recapitulate all the passages in ancient poets which *may* have suggested the obvious sentiments contained in the stanza upon which this is a comment. Ovid's

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos,
. . . . . .

and

Vulgus amicitias utilitate probat,

may serve as representatives of the tribe.

2.

And if you needs must feed the beast and bird,
Like Theban Creon, &c.
Stanza xii. lines 1 and 2.

Creon, the tyrant of Thebes, prohibited, under pain of death, the burial of Polinices, &c.

3.

And calling back to memory her art,
For she in Ind had learned chirurgery,
(Since it appears such studies in that part
Worthy of praise and fame are held to be, &c.
Stanza xxi. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

Surgery was practised by ladies of the highest birth in Europe during the middle ages, and this use was probably continued in Asia till a later era; for in the ruder periods of society (as has been already observed) the useful, and not the ornamental, arts are held in the highest honour.

4.

Whether dittany or pancy hight, &c.
Stanza xxii. line 3.

In the original,

Fosse dittano, fosse panacea.

This, like so many of Ariosto's circumstances, is to be found, in parts, in classical authorities. Virgil, in his eighth Æneid, has

Dictamnum genitrix Cretea carpit ab Idâ,

and Lucan, in his ninth book,

Et *panacæa* potens et Thessala centauræa.

5.

O Count Orlando, O king of Circassy,
Say what your valour has availed to you! &c.
Stanza xxxi. lines 1 and 2.

The hint of this stanza seems to have been given by Propertius:

Deinde ubi pertuleris quos dicit fama labores
Herculis ut scribat, muneris et quid habes?

6.

How hard would this appear, O Agricane!
Stanza xxxii. line 2.

He was one of the most furious of her lovers in the Innamorato.

7.

Ariosto is evidently indebted to Ovid for the double figure, expressed in the following lines.

To pluck, as yet untouched, the virgin rose,
Angelica permits the young Medoro.
Was none so blest as in that garden's close
Yet to have set his venturous foot before.
Stanza xxxiii. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

In the epistle to Phædria, he says:

Est aliquod plenis pomaria carpere ramis
Et tenui primam deligere ungue rosam.

8.

On Ziliantes, hid beneath the wave,
This Morgue bestowed, &c.
Stanza xxxviii. lines 1 and 2.

This is also a reference to a story in the Innamorato.

9.

Waves lifted by the waxing tempest start
Castle and flooring.
Stanza xliv. lines 1 and 2.

In the original,

Castello e ballador spezza e fracassa
L' onda nemica.

Fornari says that *ballador* means either the gangway, or the flooring of the castles. I prefer the last as the most probable explanation.

10.

One says; "Abreast of Limissò are we
Among the shoals"—and by his reckoning, nigh
The rocks of Tripoli the bark must be,
Where shipwrecked, for the most part, vessels lie.
Another; "We are lost on Sataly," &c.

Stanza xlvi. lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

"Limissò, a city of Cyprus, by Ptolemy called Cario, and Satalia, a royal city, situated upon the shore of Pamphilia formerly called Attalia," says Fornari.

11.

Ettino, and other place of sanctity.

Stanza xlviii. line 3.

I learn, from the authority cited in my last note, that there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, called the Virgin of Ettino, situated upon a rock near Aquileia. Others contend that this holy place was in the Isle of Tino, and others in Candia.

12.

Water to water others of the number
Rendered.

Stanza xlix. lines 5 and 6.

Æquorque refundit in æquor.

OVID.

13.

The wished appearance of St. Elmo's light,
Which (every spar was gone) descending glowed
Upon a boat, which in the prow was stowed.

Stanza l. lines 6, 7, 8.

An electric flame said to be often visible in the Mediterranean, and the warrant of fine weather, when assuming a particular

figure. It lights upon the masts and yards. I never saw it in that sea, but have seen it upon the beach in England, flaming on a sailor's woollen cap, at the first beginning of a thunder-storm, and thus justifying the story of Castor and Pollux. The flame descended upon the boat, as the most natural place to light upon, in the absence of mast and yards.

14.

For this the master finds a remedy,
Who bids them cast out spars, and veer away
A line which holds this float, and as they flee,
So, by two-thirds, their furious course delay.
This counsel boots, and more the augury
From him whose lights upon the gunwale play.
Stanza liii. lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

In the original,

Rimedio a questo il buon nocchier ritrova,
Che commanda gittar' per poppa spere,
E caluma la gomona, e fà prova
Di duo terzi del corso ritenere.
Questo consiglio, e più l' augurio, giova
Di chi avea acceso in proda le lumiere.

The manœuvre expressed in the four first lines would appear to have been a nautical usage in the time of Ariosto, and possibly may be practised still. For the way of a light vessel, with a shallow draft of water, as ships were then constructed and as many Mediterranean vessels are now, might assuredly be at least somewhat impeded by such a drag as is described.

The augury
From him, whose lights upon the gunwale play,

refers of course to Sant' Ermo, or St. Elmo, before alluded to, a saint of great Mediterranean, and particularly of great Neapolitan, reputation; to which he has a more especial claim, as the town in that territory possesses his bones.

The poet has perhaps not described his lights in the plural merely for the sake of the rhyme; as a commentator says that when St. Elmo's fire is double, and flashes like lightning, it is a salutary omen, but when single, is considered as of evil augury. The poet apparently means the *gunwale* of the *boat* upon which he had described it as alighting.

15.

They, driven on Syria, in Laiazzo's bay
A mighty city rise.

Stanza liv. lines 1 and 2.

Nel golfo di Laiazzo in ver Soria
Sopra una gran città si trovò *sorto*.

I have ventured to translate the Italian word *sorto*, by its English nautical equivalent, which I consider as a most picturesque phrase; and so indeed almost every thing in sea language is. I have done the same on some other occasions, where the correspondence between the two languages was exact, and where I thought a technical term deserved to be received into the ranks of poetical expression. Thus when Sacripant's horse falls dead in his duel with Bradamant in the first canto, I have rendered the Italian

morì di corto,

by '*dropt short* and dead,' not thinking that the descriptive force of such a phrase was lessened by its being more usually applied to a partridge.

Considering that our whole syntax rests upon a different basis, and that much more than one half of our phraseology is derived from a different source, it is curious to observe what a close and whimsical relation there often is between English and Italian idiom. Early commercial connexions with Italy, our sole mistress in mercantile language, will explain these correspondences; as *to make good* and *let lie dead*—'buonificare,' and 'lasciar star morti'—applied to money; 'provo di essere,' *proved to be or turned out to be*, 'buttar via,' *to fling away*,' dormirci

sopra,' *to sleep upon it* (or give it a night's reflection), 'starsene co' primi danni,' *to sit down with the first loss*, and many Venetianisms, such as 'per l' anima mia,' *for the soul of me*, and 'trovar fora,' *to find out*, &c. &c. &c. &c. Keeping this observation in sight, we shall find the ready explanation of some expressions in Shakespeare and in other writers of the Elizabethan age, which have puzzled their commentators. Thus every Italian scholar understands Juliet when speaking of Romeo as of her '*husband combinate*,' to mean her husband elect; and at this hour there is nothing more commonly in an Italian's mouth than 'Se si può *combinarla*' (if we can bring it to bear) when speaking with reference to any future arrangement.

16.

Of him inquires the English knight,
'*What kept his mind suspended in this sort,*
'*And why at first he had not made the port.*'

Stanza lvi. lines 6, 7, 8.

Fornari finds a remarkable propriety in this question being assigned to an Englishman, as one having the best right to question the patron upon points of seamanship.

17.

Like a half-moon, &c.

Stanza lxiv. line 1.

Ariosto says like a moon; but that he meant like a crescent, is evident from the whole description. The picture seems to correspond with that of Genoa, which he probably had in his eye.

18.

Which for nought else is used except the chase.

Stanza lxxvi. line 3.

The ancient arena of Verona, and the modern one of Milan, are in the same way still appropriated to the bull-chase (la caccia di tori), &c. &c. &c.

19.

Him, as the best, and biggest, and most rare,
King Norandino chose, and, decked with brave
And costly trappings, to Marphisa gave.

Stanza lxxvii. lines 6, 7, 8.

Lest the reader, unread in the usages of the age of chivalry, should be startled at one of the qualifications of the horse bestowed upon Marphisa, he is to be informed, that nothing much under a cart-horse could carry a man full-armed; and hence it was common for knights to make use of the palfrey or hackney, a lighter description of horse, for ordinary conveyance, their courser, or war-horse, being led by an attendant squire.

20.

From sell and life, with broken spine, the two
She drove at once.

Stanza lxxxiii. lines 3 and 4.

——————— animâque rotisque
Expulit,

says Ovid, speaking of Phaeton, when smitten by the thunder of Jupiter. It is curious to see how poets in all ages have indulged in this sort of conceit. Pindar says,

" Ελεν δ Οινομαυ βιαν
" Και παρθενον συνευνον,"

and Pope in the same spirit but much more appropriately to his cast of subject,

" And sometimes counsel took and sometimes tea."

21.

When revellers play the chace's merry game.

Stanza lxxxiv. line 3.

Chaces is in tennis somewhat of an equivalent to hazards at billiards, and is a term sanctioned by Shakespeare in his Henry V. It is Ariosto's word literally translated.

22.

And leaves him a half figure, in such way
As what we before images divine,
Of silver, oftener made of wax, survey.
Stanza lxxxvi. lines 3, 4, 5.

It is hardly necessary to observe that the allusion is to the *ex voto* offerings of limbs, &c. made in catholic churches by those who have escaped death or mutilation.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

Guido and his from that foul haunt retire,
While all Astolpho chases with his horn,
Who to all quarters of the town sets fire,
Then roving singly round the world is borne.
Marphisa, for Gabrina's cause, in ire
Puts upon young Zerbino scathe and scorn,
And makes him guardian of Gabrina fell,
From whom he first learns news of Isabel.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XX.

I.

GREAT feats the women of antiquity
In arms and hallowed arts as well have done,
And of their worthy works the memory
And lustre through this ample world has shone.
Praised is Camilla, with Harpalicè,
For the fair course which they in battle run.
Corinna and Sappho, famous for their lore,
Shine two illustrious lights, to set no more[1].

II.

Women have reached the pinnacle of glory,
In every art by them professed, well seen;
And whosoever turns the leaf of story,
Finds record of them, neither dim nor mean.
The evil influence will be transitory,
If long deprived of such the world has been;
And envious men, and those that never knew
Their worth, have haply hid their honours due.

III.

To me it plainly seems, in this our age
Of women such is the celebrity,
That it may furnish matter to the page,
Whence this dispersed to future years shall be;
And you, ye evil tongues which foully rage,
Be tied to your eternal infamy;
And women's praises so resplendent show,
They shall, by much, Marphisa's worth outgo.

IV.

To her returning yet again; the dame
To him who showed to her such courteous lore,
Refused not to disclose her martial name,
Since he agreed to tell the style he bore.
She quickly satisfied the warrior's claim;
To learn his title she desired so sore.
"I am Marphisa," the virago cried:
All else was known, as bruited far and wide.

V.

The other, since 'twas his to speak, begun
With longer preamble: "Amid your train,
"Sirs, it is my belief that there is none
"But has heard mention of my race and strain.
"Not Pontus, Æthiopia, Ind alone,
"With all their neighbouring realms, but France and Spain
"Wot well of Clermont, from whose loins the knight
"Issued who killed Almontes bold in fight,

VI.

" And Chiarèillo and Mambrino slew,
" And sacked the realm whose royal crown they wore.
" Come of this blood, where Danube's waters, through
" Eight horns or ten to meet the Euxine pour,
" Me to the far-renowned Duke Aymon, who
" Thither a stranger roved, my mother bore.
" And 'tis a twelvemonth now since her, in quest
" Of my French kin, I left with grief opprest;

VII.

" But reached not France, for southern tempest's spite
" Impelled me hither; lodged in royal bower
" Ten months or more; for—miserable wight!—
" I reckon every day and every hour.
" Guido the Savage I by name am hight,
" Ill known and scarcely proved in warlike stower.
" Here Argilon of Melibœa I
" Slew with ten warriors in his company.

VIII.

" Conqueror as well in other field confessed,
" Ten ladies are the partners of my bed:
" Selected at my choice, who are the best
" And fairest damsels in this kingdom bred:
" These I command, as well as all the rest,
" Who of their female band have made me head;
" And so would make another who in fight,
" Like me, ten opposites to death would smite."

IX.

Sir Guido is besought of them to say
Why there appear so few of the male race,
And to declare if women there bear sway
O'er men, as men o'er them in other place.
He; "Since my fortune has been here to stay,
"I oftentimes have heard relate the case;
"And now (according to the story told)
"Will, since it pleases you, the cause unfold.

X.

"When, after twenty years, the Grecian host
"Returned from Troy[2] (ten years hostility
"The town endured, ten weary years were tost
"The Greeks, detained by adverse winds at sea),
"They found their women had, for comforts lost,
"And pangs of absence, learned a remedy;
"And, that they might not freeze alone in bed[3],
"Chosen young lovers in their husbands' stead.

XI.

"With others' children filled the Grecian crew
"Their houses found, and by consent was past
"A pardon to their women; for they knew
"How ill they could endure so long a fast.
"But the adulterous issue, as their due,
"To seek their fortunes on the world were cast:
"Because the husbands would not suffer more
"The striplings should be nourished from their store.

XII.

" Some are exposed, and others underhand
" Their kindly mothers shelter and maintain:
" While the adults, in many a various band,
" Some here, some there dispersed, their living gain.
" Arms are the trade of some, by some are scanned
" Letters and arts; another tills the plain:
" One serves in court, by other guided go
" The herd as pleases her who rules below.

XIII.

" A boy departed with these youthful peers,
" Who was of cruel Clytemnestra born;
" Like lily fresh (he numbered eighteen years)
" Or blooming rose, new-gathered from the thorn.
" He having armed a bark, his pinnace steers
" In search of plunder, o'er the billows borne.
" With him a hundred other youths engage,
" Picked from all Greece, and of their leader's age.

XIV.

" The Cretans, who had banished in that day
" Idomeneus[4] the tyrant of their land,
" And their new state to strengthen and upstay,
" Were gathering arms and levying martial band,
" Phalantus' service by their goodly pay
" Purchased (so hight the youth who sought that strand),
" And all those others that his fortune run,
" Who the Dictæan city garrison.

XV.

" Amid the hundred cities of old Crete,
" Was the Dictæan the most rich and bright;
" Of fair and amorous dames the joyous seat,
" Joyous with festive sports from morn to night:
" And (as her townsmen aye were wont to greet
" The stranger) with such hospitable rite
" They welcomed these, it little lacked but they
" Granted them o'er their households sovereign sway.

XVI.

" Youthful and passing fair were all the crew,
" The flower of Greece, whom bold Phalantus led;
" So that with those fair ladies at first view,
" Stealing their hearts, full well the striplings sped.
" Since, fair in deed as show, they good and true
" Lovers evinced themselves and bold in bed.
" And in few days to them so grateful proved,
" Above all dearest things they were beloved.

XVII.

" After the war was ended on accord,
" For which were hired Phalantus and his train,
" And pay withdrawn, nor longer by the sword
" Was aught which the adventurous youth can gain,
" And they, for this, anew would go aboard,
" The unhappy Cretan women more complain,
" And fuller tears on this occasion shed,
" Than if their fathers lay before them dead.

XVIII.

" Long time and sorely all the striplings bold
" Were, each apart, by them implored to stay:
" Who since the fleeting youths they cannot hold,
" Leave brother, sire, and son, with these to stray,
" Of jewels and of weighty sums of gold
" Spoiling their households ere they wend their way.
" For so well was the plot concealed, no wight
" Throughout all Crete was privy to their flight.

XIX.

" So happy was the hour, so fair the wind,
" When young Phalantus chose his time to flee,
" They many miles had left the isle behind,
" Ere Crete lamented her calamity.
" Next, uninhabited by human kind,
" This shore received them wandering o'er the sea.
" 'Twas here they settled, with the plunder reft,
" And better weighed the issue of their theft.

XX.

" With amorous pleasures teemed this place of rest,
" For ten days, to that roving company:
" But, as oft happens that in youthful breast
" Abundance brings with it satiety,
" To quit their women, with one wish possest,
" The band resolved to win their liberty;
" For never burden does so sore oppress
" As woman, when her love breeds weariness.

XXI.

" They, who are covetous of spoil and gain,
" And ill-bested withal in stipend, know
" That better means are wanted to maintain
" So many paramours, than shaft and bow;
" And leaving thus alone the wretched train,
" Thence, with their riches charged the adventurers go
" For Puglia's pleasant land: there founded near
" The sea, Tarentum's city, as I hear.

XXII.

" The women when they find themselves betrayed
" Of lovers by whose faith they set most store,
" For many days remain so sore dismayed,
" That they seem lifeless statues on the shore.
" But seeing lamentations nothing aid,
" And fruitless are the many tears they pour,
" Begin to meditate, amid their pains,
" What remedy for such an ill remains.

XXIII.

" Some laying their opinions now before
" The others, deem, ' that to return to Crete
' Is in their sad estate the wiser lore,
' Throwing themselves at sire and husband's feet,
' Than in those wilds, and on that desert shore,
' To pine of want.' Another troop repeat,
' They should esteem it were a worthier notion
' To cast themselves into the neighbouring ocean;

XXIV.

' And lighter ill, if they as harlots went
' About the world,—beggars or slaves to be,
' Than offer up themselves for punishment,
' Well merited by their iniquity.'
" Such and like schemes the unhappy dames present,
" Each harder than the other. Finally,
" One Orontea amid these upstood,
" Who drew her origin from Minos' blood.

XXV.

" Youngest and fairest of the crew betrayed
" She was, and wariest, and who least had erred,
" Who to Phalantus' arms had come a maid,
" And left for him her father: she in word,
" As well as in a kindling face, displayed
" How much with generous wrath her heart was stirred;
" Then, reprobating all advised before,
" Spake; and adopted saw her better lore.

XXVI.

' She would not leave the land they were upon,
' Whose soil was fruitful, and whose air was sane,
' Throughout which many limpid rivers ran,
' Shaded with woods, and for the most part plain;
' With creek and port, where stranger bark could shun
' Foul wind or storm, which vexed the neighbouring main,
' That might from Afric or from Egypt bring
' Victual or other necessary thing.

XXVII.

' For vengeance (she opined) they there should stay
' Upon man's sex, which had so sore offended.
' She willed each bark and crew which to that bay
' For shelter from the angry tempest wended,
' They should, without remorse, burn, sack, and slay,
' Nor mercy be to any one extended.'
" Such was the lady's motion, such the course
" Adopted; and the statute put in force.

XXVIII.

" The women, when they see the changing heaven
" Turbid with tempest, hurry to the strand,
" With savage Orontea, by whom given
" Was the fell law, the ruler of the land;
" And of all barks into their haven driven
" Make havoc dread with fire and murderous brand,
" Leaving no man alive, who may diffuse
" Upon this side or that the dismal news.

XXIX.

" 'Twas thus with the male sex at enmity,
" Some years the lonely women lived forlorn:
" Then found that hurtful to themselves would be
" The scheme, save changed; for if from them were born
" None to perpetuate their empery,
" The idle law would soon be held in scorn,
" And fail together with the unfruitful reign,
" Which they had hoped eternal should remain.

XXX.

" So that some deal its rigour they allay,
" And in four years, of all who made repair
" Thither, by chance conducted to this bay,
" Chose out ten vigorous cavaliers and fair;
" That for endurance in the amorous play
" Against those hundred dames good champions were:
" A hundred they; and, of the chosen men,
" A husband was assigned to every ten.

XXXI.

" Ere this, too feeble to abide the test,
" Many a one on scaffold lost his head.
" Now these ten warriors so approved the best,
" Were made partakers of their rule and bed;
" First swearing at the sovereign ladies' hest,
' That they, if others to that port are led,
' No mercy shall to any one afford,
' But one and all will put them to the sword.'

XXXII.

" To swell, and next to child, and thence to fear,
" The women turned to teeming wives, began,
" Lest they in time so many males should bear
" As might invade the sovereignty they plan,
" And that the government they hold so dear
" Might finally from them revert to man.
" And so, while these are children yet, take measure,
" They never shall rebel against their pleasure.

XXXIII.

" That the male sex may not usurp the sway,
" It is enacted by the statute fell,
' Each mother should one boy preserve, and slay
' The others, or abroad exchange or sell.
' For this, they these to various parts convey,
' And to the bearers of the children tell,
' To truck the girls for boys in foreign lands,
' Or not, at least, return with empty hands.'

XXXIV.

" Nor by the women one preserved would be,
" If they without them could the race maintain.
" Such all their mercy, all the clemency
" The law accords for *theirs*, not *others'* gain.
" The dames all others sentence equally;
" And temper but in this their statute's pain,
" That, not as was their former practice, they
" All in their rage promiscuously slay.

XXXV.

" Did ten or twenty persons, or yet more,
" Arrive, they were imprisoned and put by;
" And every day one only from the store
" Of victims was brought out by lot to die,
" In fane by Orontea built, before
" An altar raised to Vengeance; and to ply
" As headsman, and dispatch the unhappy men,
" One was by lot selected from the ten.

XXXVI.

" To that foul murderous shore by chance did fare,
" After long years elapsed, a youthful wight,
" Whose fathers sprung from good Alcides were,
" And he, of proof in arms, Elbanio hight;
" There was he seized, of peril scarce aware,
" As unsuspecting such a foul despite:
" And, closely guarded, into prison flung,
" Kept for like cruel use the rest among.

XXXVII.

" Adorned with every fair accomplishment,
" Of pleasing face and manners was the peer,
" And of a speech so sweet and eloquent,
" Him the deaf adder might have stopt to hear;
" So that of him to Alexandria went
" Tidings as of a precious thing and rare.
" She was the daughter of that matron bold,
" Queen Orontea, that yet lived, though old.

XXXVIII.

" Yet Orontea lived, while of that shore
" The other settlers all were dead and gone;
" And now ten times as many such or more
" Had into strength and greater credit grown.
" Nor for ten forges, often closed, in store
" Have the ill-furnished band more files than one;
" And the ten champions have as well the care
" To welcome shrewdly all who thither fare.

XXXIX.

"Young Alexandria, who the blooming peer
" Burned to behold so praised on every part,
" The special pleasure him to see and hear,
" Won from her mother; and, about to part
" From him, discovers that the cavalier
" Remains the master of her tortured heart;
" Finds herself bound, and that 'tis vain to stir,
" —A captive made by her own prisoner[5]."

XL.

' If pity,' (said Elbanio) ' lady fair,
' Was in this cruel region known, as through
' All other countries near or distant, where
' The wandering sun sheds light and colouring hue,
' I by your beauty's kindly charms should dare
' (Which make each gentle spirit bound to you)
' To beg my life; which always, at your will,
' Should I be ready for your love to spill.

XLI.

' But since deprived of all humanity
' Are human bosoms in this cruel land,
' I shall not now request my life of thee,
' (For fruitless would, I know, be the demand)
' But, whether a good knight or bad I be,
' Ask but like such to die with arms in hand,
' And not as one condemned to penal pain
' Or like brute beast in sacrifice be slain.'

XLII.

"The gentle maid, her eye bedimmed with tear,
"In pity for the hapless youth, replied;
'Though this land be more cruel and severe
'Than any other country, far and wide,
'Each woman is not a Medæa here
'As thou wouldst make her; and, if all beside
'Were of such evil kind, in me alone
'Should an exception to the rest be known.

XLIII.

'And though I, like so many here, of yore
'Was full of evil deeds and cruelty,
'I can well say, I never had before
'A fitting subject for my clemency.
'But fiercer were I than a tiger, more
'Hard were my heart than diamond, if in me
'All hardness did not vanish and give place
'Before your courage, gentleness, and grace.

XLIV.

'Ah! were the cruel statute less severe
'Against the stranger to these shores conveyed!
'So should I not esteem by death too dear
'A ransom for thy worthier life were paid.
'But none is here so great, sir cavalier,
'Nor of such puissance as to lend thee aid;
'And what thou askest, though a scanty grace,
'Were difficult to compass in this place.

XLV.

' And yet will I endeavour to obtain
' For thee, before thou perish, this content;
' Though much, I fear, 'twill but augment thy pain,
' And thee protracted death but more torment.'
' So I the ten encounter,' (said again
Elbanio), ' I at heart, am confident
' Myself to save, and enemies to slay;
' Though made of iron were the whole array.'

XLVI.

" To this the youthful Alexandria nought
" Made answer, saving with a piteous sigh;
" And from the conference a bosom brought,
" Gored with deep wounds, beyond all remedy.
" To Orontea she repaired, and wrought
" On her to will the stripling should not die,
" Should he display such courage and such skill
" As with his single hand the ten to kill.

XLVII.

" Queen Orontea straightway bade unite
" Her council, and bespoke the assembled band;
' It still behoves us place the prowest wight
' Whom we can find, to guard our ports and strand.
' And, to discover whom to take or slight,
' 'Tis fitting that we prove the warrior's hand:
' Lest, to our loss, the election made be wrong,
' And we enthrone the weak and slay the strong.

XLVIII.

'I deem it fit, if you the counsel shown
'Deem fit as well, in future to ordain,
'That each upon our coast by Fortune thrown,
'Before he in the temple shall be slain,
'Shall have the choice, instead of this, alone
'Battle against ten others to maintain;
'And if he conquer, shall the port defend
'With other comrades, pardoned to that end.

XLIX.

'I say this, since to strive against our ten,
'It seems, that one imprisoned here will dare:
'Who, if he stands against so many men,
'By Heaven, deserves that we should hear his prayer;
'But if he rashly boasts himself, again
'As worthily due punishment should bear.'
"Here Orontea ceased; on the other side,
"To her the oldest of the dames replied.

L.

'The leading cause, for which to entertain
'This intercourse with men we first agreed,
'Was not because we, to defend this reign,
'Of their assistance stood in any need;
'For we have skill and courage to maintain
'This of ourselves, and force, withal, to speed.
'Would that we could in all as well avail
'Without their succour, nor succession fail!

LI.

'But since this may not be, we some have made
'(These few) partakers of our company;
'That, ten to one, we be not overlaid;
'Nor they possess them of the sovereignty.
'Not that we for protection need their aid,
'But simply to increase and multiply.
'Then be their powers to this sole feat addressed,
'And be they sluggards, idle for the rest.

LII.

'To keep among us such a puissant wight
'Our first design would render wholly vain.
'If one can singly slay ten men in fight,
'How many women can he not restrain?
'If our ten champions had possessed such might,
'They the first day would have usurped the reign.
'To arm a hand more powerful than your own
'Is an ill method to maintain the throne.

LIII.

'Reflect withal, that if your prisoner speed
'So that he kill ten champions in the fray,
'A hundred women's cry, whose lords will bleed
'Beneath his falchion, shall your ears dismay.
'Let him not 'scape by such a murderous deed;
'But, if he would, propound some other way.
'—Yet if he of those ten supply the place,
'And please a hundred women, grant him grace.'

LIV.

" This was severe Artemia's sentiment,
" (So was she named) and had her counsel weighed,
" Elbanio to the temple had been sent,
" To perish by the sacrificial blade.
" But Orontea, willing to content
" Her daughter, to the matron answer made;
" And urged so many reasons, and so wrought,
" The yielding senate granted what she sought.

LV.

" Elbanio's beauty (for so fair to view
" Never was any cavalier beside)
" So strongly works upon the youthful crew,
" Which in that council sit the state to guide,
" That the opinion of the older few
" That like Artemia think, is set aside;
" And little lacks but that the assembled race
" Absolve Elbanio by especial grace.

LVI.

" To pardon him in fine the dames agreed:
" But, after slaying his half-score, and when
" He in the next assault as well should speed,
" Not with a hundred women, but with ten;
" And, furnished to his wish with arms and steed,
" Next day he was released from dungeon-den,
" And singly with ten warriors matched in plain,
" Who by his arm successively were slain.

LVII.

" He to new proof was put the following night,
" Against ten damsels naked and alone;
" When so successful was the stripling's might,
" He took the 'say of all the troop, and won
" Such grace with Orontea, that the knight
" Was by the dame adopted for her son;
" And from her Alexandria had to wife,
" With those whom he had proved in amorous strife.

LVIII.

" And him she left with Alexandria, heir
" To this famed city, which from her was hight,
" So he and all who his successors were,
" Should guard the law which willed, whatever wight,
" Conducted hither by his cruel star,
" Upon this miserable land did light,
" Should have his choice to perish by the knife,
" Or singly with ten foes contend in strife.

LIX.

" And if he should dispatch the men by day,
" At night should prove him with the female crew;
" And if so fortunate that in this play
" He proved again the conqueror, he, as due,
" The female band, as prince and guide, should sway,
" And his ten consorts at his choice renew:
" And reign with them, till other should arrive
" Of stouter hand, and him of life deprive.

LX.

" They for two thousand years nigh past away
" This usage have maintained, and yet maintain
" The impious rite; and rarely passes day
" But stranger wight is slaughtered in the fane.
" If he, Elbanio-like, ten foes assay,
" (And such sometimes is found) he oft is slain
" In the first charge: nor, in a thousand, one
" The other feat, of which I spake, has done.

LXI.

" Yet some there are have done it, though so few,
" They may be numbered on the fingers; one
" Of the victorious cavaliers, but who
" Reigned with his ten short time, was Argilon:
" For, smote by me, whom ill wind hither blew,
" The knight to his eternal rest is gone.
" Would I with him that day had filled a grave,
" Rather than in such scorn survive a slave!

LXII.

" For amorous pleasures, laughter, game, and play,
" Which evermore delight the youthful breast;
" The gem, the purple garment, rich array,
" And in his city place before the rest.
" Little, by Heaven, the wretched man appay
" Who of his liberty is dispossest:
" And not to have the power to leave this shore
" To me seems shameful servitude and sore.

LXIII.

" To know I wear away life's glorious spring
" In such effeminate and slothful leisure
" Is to my troubled heart a constant sting,
" And takes away the taste of every pleasure.
" Fame bears my kindred's praise on outstretched wing,
" Even to the skies; and haply equal measure
" I of the glories of my blood might share
" If I united with my brethren were.

LXIV.

" Methinks my fate does such injurious deed
" By me, condemned to servitude so base,
" As he who turns to grass the generous steed
" To run amid the herd of meaner race,
" Because unfit for war or worthier meed,
" Through blemish, or disease of sight or pace.
" Nor hoping but by death, alas! to fly
" So vile a service, I desire to die."

LXV.

Here Guido ceased to address the martial peers,
And cursed withal the day, in high disdain,
That he achieved o'er dames and cavaliers
The double victory which bestowed that reign.
Astolpho hides his name, and silent hears,
Until to him by many a sign is plain
That this Sir Guido is, as he had said,
The issue of his kinsman Aymon's bed.

LXVI.

Then cried; " The English duke, Astolpho, I
" Thy cousin am," and clipt him round the waist,
And in a kindly act of courtesy,
Not without weeping, kist him and embraced.
Then, " Kinsman dear, thy birth to certify
" No better sign thy mother could have placed
" About thy neck. Enough! that sword of thine,
" And courage, vouch thee of our valiant line."

LXVII.

Guido who gladly would in other place
So near a kin have welcomed, in dismay
Beholds him here and with a mournful face;
Knowing, if he himself survives the fray,
Astolpho will be doomed to slavery base,
His fate deferred but till the following day;
And he shall perish, if the duke is free:
So that one's good the other's ill shall be.

LXVIII.

He grieves, as well, the other cavaliers
Should through his means for ever captive be;
Nor, that he should, if slain, those martial peers
Deliver by *his* death from slavery.
Since if Marphisa from one quicksand clears
The troop, yet these from other fails to free,
She will have won the victory in vain;
For they will be enslaved, and she be slain.

LXIX.

On the other hand, the stripling's age, in May
Of youth, with courtesy and valour fraught,
Upon the maid and comrades with such sway,
Touching their breasts with love and pity, wrought
That they of freedom, for which he must pay
The forfeit of his life, nigh loathed the thought;
And if Marphisa him perforce must kill,
She is resolved as well herself to spill.

LXX.

" Join thou with us," she to Sir Guido cried,
" And we from hence will sally"—" From within
" These walls to sally"—Guido on his side
Answered, " Ne'er hope: With me you lose or win."
" —I fear not, I," the martial maid replied,
" To execute whatever I begin;
" Nor know what can securer path afford
" Than that which I shall open with my sword.

LXXI.

" Such proof of thy fair prowess have I made,
" With thee I every enterprise would dare.
" To-morrow when about the palisade
" The crowds assembled in the circus are,
" Let us on every side the mob invade,
" Whether they fly or for defence prepare;
" Then give the town to fire, and on their bed
" Of earth to wolf and vulture leave the dead."

LXXII.

He; " Ready shalt thou find me in the strife
" To follow thee or perish at thy side:
" But let us hope not to escape with life.
" Enough, is vengeance somedeal satisfied
" Ere death; for oft ten thousand, maid and wife,
" I in the place have witnessed; and, outside,
" As many castle, wall and port, defend.
" Nor know I certain way from hence to wend."

LXXIII.

" And were there more (Marphisa made reply)
" Than Xerxes led, our squadron to oppose,
" More than those rebel spirits from the sky
" Cast out to dwell amid perpetual woes,
" All in one day should by this weapon die,
" Wert thou with me, at least, not with my foes."
To her again, " No project but must fail,
" (Sir Guido said) I know, save this avail."

LXXIV.

" This only us can save, should it succeed;
" This, which but now remembered I shall teach.
" To dames alone our laws the right concede
" To sally, or set foot upon the beach,
" And hence to one of mine in this our need
" Must I commit myself, and aid beseech;
" Whose love for me, by perfect friendship tied,
" Has oft by better proof than this been tried.

LXXV.

" No less than me would she desire that I
" Should 'scape from slavery, so she went with me;
" And that, without her rival's company,
" She of my lot should sole partaker be.
" She bark or pinnace, in the harbour nigh,
" Shall bid, while yet 'tis dark, prepare for sea;
" Which shall await your sailors, rigged and yare
" For sailing, when they thither shall repair.

LXXVI.

" Behind me, in a solid band comprest,
" Ye merchants, mariners and warriors, who,
" Driven to this city, have set up your rest
" Beneath this roof (for which my thanks are due)
" —You have to force your way with stedfast breast,
" If adversaries interrupt our crew.
" 'Tis thus I hope, by succour of the sword,
" To clear a passage through the cruel horde."

LXXVII.

" Do as thou wilt;" Marphisa made reply,
" I of escape am confident withal:
" And likelier 'twere that by my hand should die
" The martial race, encompassed by this wall,
" Than any one should ever see me fly,
" Or guess by other sign that fears appall.
" I would my passage force in open day,
" And shameful in my sight were other way.

LXXVIII.

" I wot if I were for a woman known,
" Honour and place from women I might claim,
" Here gladly entertained, and classed as one
" Haply among their chiefs of highest fame:
" But privilege or favour will I none
" Unshared by those with whom I hither came.
" Too base it were, did I depart or free
" Remain, to leave the rest in slavery."

LXXIX.

These speeches by Marphisa made, and more,
Showed that what only had restrained her arm
Was the respect she to the safety bore
Of the companions whom her wrath might harm;
By this alone withheld from taking sore
And signal vengeance on the female swarm.
And hence she left in Guido's care to shape
What seemed the fittest means for their escape.

LXXX.

Sir Guido speaks that night with Alery
(So the most faithful of his wives was hight)
Nor needs long prayer to make the dame agree,
Disposed already to obey the knight.
She takes a ship and arms the bark for sea,
Stowed with her richest chattels for their flight;
Feigning design, as soon as dawn ensues,
To sail with her companions on a cruise.

LXXXI.

She into Guido's palace had before
Bid sword and spear and shield and cuirass bear;
With the intent to furnish from this store,
Merchants and sailors that half naked were.
Some watch, and some repose upon the floor,
And rest and guard among each other share;
Oft marking, still with harness on their backs,
If ruddy yet with light the orient wax.

LXXXII.

Not yet from earth's hard visage has the sun
Lifted her veil of dim and dingy dye;
Scarcely Lycaon's child, her furrow done,
Has turned about her ploughshare in the sky[6];
When to the theatre the women run
Who would the fearful battle's end espy,
As swarming bees upon their threshold cluster,
Who bent on change of realm in springtide muster.

LXXXIII.

With warlike trumpet, drum, and sound of horn,
The people make the land and welkin roar;
Summoning thus their chieftain to return,
And end the unfinished warfare. Covered o'er
With arms stand Aquilant and Gryphon stern,
And the redoubted duke from England's shore.
Marphisa, Dudo, Sansonet, and all
The knights or footmen harboured in that hall.

LXXXIV.

'Hence to descend towards the sea or port
'The way across the place of combat lies;
'Nor was there other passage, long or short.'
Sir Guido so to his companions cries:
And having ceased his comrades to exhort,
To do their best set forth in silent wise,
And in the place appeared, amid the throng,
Head of a squad above a hundred strong.

LXXXV.

Towards the other gate Sir Guido went,
Hurrying his band, but, gathered far and nigh
The mighty multitude, for aye intent
To smite, and clad in arms, when they descry
The comrades whom he leads, perceive his bent,
And truly deem he is about to fly.
All in a thought betake them to their bows,
And at the portal part the knight oppose.

LXXXVI.

Sir Guido and the cavaliers who go
Beneath that champion's guidance, and before
The others bold Marphisa, were not slow
To strike, and laboured hard to force the door.
But such a storm of darts from ready bow,
Dealing on all sides death or wounding sore,
Was rained in fury on the troop forlorn,
They feared at last to encounter skaith and scorn.

LXXXVII.

Of proof the corslet was each warrior wore,
Who without this would have had worse to fear:
Sansonnet's horse was slain, and that which bore
Marphisa: to himself the English peer
Exclaimed, "Why wait I longer? As if more
"My horn could ever succour me than here.
"Since the sword steads not, I will make assay
"If with my bugle I can clear the way."

LXXXVIII.

As he was customed in extremity,
He to his mouth applied the bugle's round;
The wide world seemed to tremble, earth and sky,
As he in air discharged the horrid sound.
Such terror smote the dames, that bent to fly,
When in their ears the deafening horn was wound,
Not only they the gate unguarded left,
But from the circus reeled, of wit bereft.

LXXXIX.

As family, awaked in sudden wise,
Leaps from the windows and from lofty height,
Periling life and limb, when in surprise
They see, now near, the fire's encircling light,
Which had, while slumber sealed their heavy eyes,
By little and by little waxed at night:
Reckless of life, thus each, impelled by dread,
At sound of that appalling bugle fled.

XC.

Above, below, and here and there, the rout
Rise in confusion and attempt to fly.
At once, above a thousand swarm about
Each entrance, to each other's lett, and lie
In heaps: from window these, or stage without,
Leap headlong; in the press these smothered die.
Broken is many an arm, and many a head;
And one lies crippled, and another dead.

XCI.

Amid the mighty ruin which ensued,
Cries pierce the very heavens on every part.
Where'er the sound is heard, the multitude,
In panic at the deafening echo, start.
When you are told that without hardihood
Appear the rabble, and of feeble heart,
This need not move your marvel; for by nature
The hare is evermore a timid creature.

XCII.

But of Marphisa what will be your thought,
And Guido late so furious?—of the two
Young sons of Olivier, that lately wrought
Such deeds in honour of their lineage? who
Lately a hundred thousand held as nought,
And now, deprived of courage, basely flew,
As ring-doves flutter and as coneys fly,
Who hear some mighty noise resounding nigh.

XCIII.

For so to friend as stranger, noxious are
The powers that in the enchanted horn reside.
Sansonet, Guido, follow, with the pair*
Of brethren bold, Marphisa terrified.
Nor flying, can they to such distance fare,
But that their ears are dinned. On every side
Astolpho, on his foaming courser borne,
Lends louder breath to his enchanted horn.

XCIV.

One sought the sea, and one the mountain-top,
One fled to hide herself in forest hoar;
And this, who turned not once nor made a stop,
Not for ten days her headlong flight forbore:
These from the bridge in that dread moment drop,
Never to climb the river's margin more.
So temple, house and square and street were drained,
That nigh unpeopled the wide town remained.

XCV.

Marphisa, Guido, and the brethren two,
With Sansonetto, pale and trembling, hie
Towards the sea, and behind these the crew
Of frighted mariners and merchants fly;
And 'twixt the forts, in bark, prepared with view
To their escape, discover Alery;
Who in sore haste receives the warriors pale,
And bids them ply their oars and make all sail.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

XCVI.

The duke within and out the town had beat
From the surrounding hills to the sea-side,
And of its people emptied every street.
All fly before the deafening sound, and hide:
Many in panic, seeking a retreat,
Lurk, in some place obscure and filthy stied;
Many, not knowing whither to repair,
Plunge in the neighbouring sea, and perish there.

XCVII.

The duke arrives, seeking the friendly band,
Whom he had hoped to find upon the quay;
He turns and gazes round the desert strand,
And none is there—directs along the bay
His eyes, and now, far distant from the land,
Beholds the parting frigate under way.
So that the paladin, for his escape—
The vessel gone—must other project shape.

XCVIII.

Let him depart! nor let it trouble you
That he so long a road must beat alone;
Where, never without fear, man journeys through
Wild paynim countries: danger is there none,
But what he with his bugle may eschew,
Whose dread effect the English duke has shown;
And let his late companions be our care,
Who trembling to the beach had made repair.

XCIX.

They from that cruel and ensanguined ground
To seaward, under all their canvas, bore;
And having gained such offing, that the sound
Of that alarming horn was heard no more,
Unwonted shame inflicted such a wound,
That all a face of burning crimson wore.
One dares not eye the other, and they stand
With downcast looks, a mute and mournful band.

C.

Fixed on his course, the pilot passes by
Cyprus and Rhodes, and ploughs the Ægean sea:
Beholds a hundred islands from him fly,
And Malea's fearful headland: fanned by free
And constant wind, sees vanish from the eye
The Greek Morea; rounding Sicily,
Into the Tuscan sea his frigate veers,
And, coasting Italy's fair region, steers:

CI.

Last rises Luna, where his family
Is waiting his return; the patron hoar
Gives thanks to God at having passed the sea
Without more harm, and makes the well-known shore.
Here, offering passage to their company,
They find a master, ready to unmoor
For France, and that same day his pinnace climb;
Thence wafted to Marseilles in little time.

CII.

There was not Bradamant, who used to sway
The land, and had that city in her care,
And who (if present there) to make some stay
Would have compelled them by her courteous prayer.
They disembarked; and that same hour away
Did bold Marphisa at a venture fare;
Bidding adieu to salvage Guido's wife,
And to the four, her comrades in the strife:

CIII.

Saying, 'she deems unfitting for a knight
'To fare in like great fellowship; that so
'The starlings and the doves in flock unite,
'And every beast who fears—the stag and doe;
'But hawk and eagle, that in other's might
'Put not their trust, for ever singly go;
'And lion, bear, and tyger, roam alone,
'Who fear no prowess greater than their own.'

CIV.

But none with her opine, and, in the lack
Of a companion, singly must she fare.
So then, alone and friendless, she a track
Uncouth pursues, and through a wooded lair.
Gryphon the white and Aquilant the black
Take road more beaten with the other pair;
And on the following day a castle see,
Within which they are harboured courteously.

CV.

Courteously I, in outward show, would say;
For soon the contrary was made appear.
Since he, the castellain, who with display
Of kindness sheltered them and courteous cheer,
The night ensuing took them as they lay
Couched in their beds, secure and void of fear.
Nor from the snare would he his prisoners loose,
Till they had sworn to observe an evil use.

CVI.

But I will first pursue the martial maid,
Ere more of these, fair sir, I shall proclaim.
Beyond the Durence, Rhone, and Saone she strayed,
And to the foot of sunny mountain came;
And there approaching in black gown arrayed,
Beside a torrent, saw an ancient dame;
Who with long journey weak, and wearied sore,
Appeared, but pined by melancholy more.

CVII.

This was the beldam who had wont to ply
Serving the robbers in the caverned mount;
Whither stern Justice sent (that they might die
By that good paladin) Anglante's count.
The aged harridan, for cause which I
To you shall in another place recount,
Now many days by path obscure had flown,
Still fearing lest her visage should be know...

CVIII.

The semblance now of foreign cavalier
She in Marphisa saw, in arms and vest;
And hence she flies not her, though wont to fear,
(As being natives of that land) the rest;
—Nay, with security and open cheer,
Stops at the ford the damsel to arrest:
Stops at the ford—where that old beldam meets
Marphisa, and with fair encounter greets.

CIX.

And next implored the maid, she of her grace
Would bear her on the croupe to the other shore.
Marphisa, who was come of gentle race,
The hag with her across the torrent bore;
And is content to bear, till she can place
In a securer road the beldam hoar,
Clear of a spacious marish: at its end
They see a cavalier towards them wend.

CX.

In shining armour and in fair array,
The warrior rode on saddle richly wrought
Towards the river, and upon his way
With him a single squire and dâmsel brought.
Of passing beauty was the lady gay,
But little pleasing was her semblance haught;
All overblown with insolence and pride,
Worthy the cavalier who was her guide.

CXI.

He of Maganza was a count, who bore
The lady with him (Pinabello hight):
The same who Bradamant, some months before,
Had plunged into a hollow cave in spite.
Those many sobs, those burning sighs and sore,
Those tears which had nigh quenched the warrior's sight,—
All for the damsel were, now at his side;
And then by that false necromancer stied.

CXII.

But when the magic tower upon the hill
Was razed, the dwelling of Atlantes hoar,
And every one was free to rove at will,
Through Bradamant's good deed and virtuous lore,
The damsel, who had been compliant still
With the desires of Pinabel before,
Rejoined him, and now journeying in a round
With him, from castle was to castle bound.

CXIII.

As wanton and ill-customed, when she spies
Marphisa's aged charge approaching near,
She cannot rein her saucy tongue, but plies
Her, in her petulance, with laugh and jeer.
Marphisa haught, unwont in any wise
Outrage from whatsoever part to hear,
Makes answer to the dame, in angry tone,
That 'handsomer than her she deems the crone.

CXIV.

And that she this would prove upon her knight
'With pact that she might strip the bonnibell
'Of gown and palfrey, if, o'erthrown in fight,
'Her champion from his goodly courser fell.'
—In silence to have overpast the slight
Would have been sin and shame in Pinabel,
Who for short answer seized his shield and spear,
And wheeled, and drove at her in fierce career.

CXV.

Marphisa grasped a mighty lance, and thrust,
Encountering him, at Pinabello's eyes;
And stretched him so astounded in the dust,
That motionless an hour the warrior lies.
Marphisa, now victorious in the just,
Gave orders to strip off the glorious guise
And ornaments wherewith the maid was drest,
And with the spoils her ancient crone invest;

CXVI.

And willed that she should don the youthful weed,
Bedizened at the haughty damsel's cost;
And took away as well the goodly steed
Which her had thither borne, and—bent to post
On her old track—with her the hag will speed,
Who seems most hideous when adorned the most.
Three days the tedious road the couple beat,
Without adventure needful to repeat.

CXVII.

On the fourth day they met a cavalier,
Who came in fury galloping alone.
If you the stranger's name desire to hear,
I tell you 'twas Zerbino, a king's son,
Of beauty and of worth example rare,
Now grieved and angered, as unvenged of one,
Who a great act of courtesy, which fain
The warrior would have done, had rendered vain.

CXVIII.

Vainly the young Zerbino, through the glade,
Had chased that man of his, who this despite
Had done him, who himself so well conveyed
Away and took such 'vantage in his flight,
So hid by wood and mist, which overlaid
The horizon and bedimmed the morning-light,
That he escaped Zerbino's grasp, and lay
Concealed until his wrath was past away.

CXIX.

Zerbino laughed parforce, when he descried
That beldam's face, though he was full of rage;
For too ill-sorted seemed her vest of pride
With her foul visage, more deformed by age;
And to the proud Marphisa, at her side
The prince, exclaimed, "Sir warrior, you are sage,
"In having chosen damsel of a sort,
"Whom none, I ween, will grudge you should escort."

CXX.

Older than Sibyl seemed the beldam hoar,
(As far as from her wrinkles one might guess),
And in the youthful ornaments she wore,
Looked like an ape which men in mockery dress;
And now appears more foul, as angered sore,
While rage and wrath her kindled eyes express.
For none can do a woman worse despite
Than to proclaim her old and foul to sight.

CXXI.

To have sport of him—as she had—an air
Of wrath the maid assumed upon her part,
And to the prince, " By Heaven, more passing fair
" Is this my lady than thou courteous art,"
Exclaimed in answer; " though I am aware
" What thou hast uttered comes not from thy heart.
" Thou wilt not own her beauty; a device
" Put on to masque thy sovereign cowardice.

CXXII.

" And of what stamp would be that cavalier
" Who found such fair and youthful dame alone,
" Without protection, in the forest drear,
" Nor sought to make the lovely weft his own?"
—" So well she sorts with thee," replied the peer,
" 'Twere ill that she were claimed by any one:
" Nor I of her would thee in any wise
" Deprive; God rest thee merry with thy prize!

CXXIII.

" But wouldst thou prove what is my chivalry,
" On other ground I to thy wish incline;
" Yet deem me not of such perversity
" As to tilt with thee for this prize of thine.
" Or fair or foul, let her remain thy fee;
" I would not, I, such amity disjoin.
" Well are ye paired, and safely would I swear
" That thou as valiant art as she is fair."

CXXIV.

To him Marphisa, " Thou in thy despite
" Shalt try to bear from me the dame away.
" I will not suffer that so fair a sight
" Thou shouldst behold, nor seek to gain the prey."
To her the prince, " I know not wherefore wight
" Should suffer pain and peril in affray,
" Striving for victory, where, for his pains,
" The victor loses, and the vanquished gains."

CXXV.

" If this condition please not, other course
" Which ill thou canst refuse, I offer thee,"
(Marphisa cried): " If thou shalt me unhorse
" In this our tourney, she remains with me:
" But if I win, I give her thee parforce.
" Then prove we now who shall without her be.
" Premised, if loser, thou shalt be her guide,
" Wherever it may please the dame to ride."

CXXVI.

" And be it so," Zerbino cried, and wheeled
Swiftly his foaming courser for the shock,
And rising in his stirrups scowered the field,
Firm in his seat, and smote, with levelled stock,
For surer aim, the damsel in mid-shield;
But she sate stedfast as a metal rock,
And at the warrior's morion thrust so well,
She clean out-bore him senseless from the sell.

CXXVII.

Much grieved the prince, to whom in other fray
The like misfortune had not chanced before,
Who had unhorsed some thousands in his day:
Now shamed, he thought for ever. Troubled sore,
And mute long space upon the ground he lay,
And, when 'twas recollected, grieved the more,
That he had promised, and that he was bound,
To accompany the hag where'er she wound.

CXXVIII.

Turning about to him the victoress cried,
Laughing, " This lady I to thee present,
" And the more beauty is in her descried,
" The more that she is thine I am content,
" Now in my place her champion and her guide.
" But do not thou thy plighted faith repent,
" So that thou fail, as promised, to attend
" The dame, wherever she may please to wend."

CXXIX.

Without awaiting answer, to career
She spurred her horse, and vanished in the wood.
Zerbino, deeming her a cavalier,
Cried to the crone, " By whom am I subdued?"
And, knowing 'twould be poison to his ear,
And that it would inflame his angered blood,
She in reply, " It was a damsel's blow
" Which from thy lofty saddle laid thee low[7].

CXXX.

" She, for her matchless force, deservedly
" Usurps from cavalier the sword and lance;
" And even from the east is come to try
" Her strength against the paladins of France."
Not only was his cheek of crimson dye,
Such shame Zerbino felt at his mischance,
Little was wanting (so his blushes spread)
But all the arms he wore had glowed as red.

CXXXI.

He mounts, and blames himself in angry wise,
In that he had no better kept his seat.
Within herself the beldam laughs, and tries
The Scottish warrior more to sting and heat.
To him for promised convoy she applies;
And he, who knows that there is no retreat,
Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,
Hangs down his ears, controlled by spur and bit[8].

CXXXII.

And, sighing deeply, cries, in his despair,
" Fell Fortune, with what change dost thou repay
" My loss! she who was fairest of the fair,
" Who should be mine, by thee is snatched away!
" And thinkest thou the evil to repair
" With her whom thou hast given to me this day?
" Rather than make like ill exchange, less cross
" It were to undergo a total loss.

CXXXIII.

" Her, who for virtue and for beauteous form
" Was never equalled, nor will ever be,
" Thou on the rocks hast wrecked, in wintry storm,
" As food for fowls and fishes of the sea;
" And her who should have fed the earth-bred worm
" Thou hast delivered from her destiny;
" Preserved beyond her date, some ten or score
" Of years, to harass and torment me more."

CXXXIV.

So spake Zerbino, and like grief displaid,
In his despairing words and woful mien,
For such an odious acquisition made,
As he had suffered when he lost his queen.
The aged woman now, from what he said,
Though she before Zerbino had not seen,
Perceived 'twas him of whom, in the thieves' hold,
Isabel of Gallicia erst had told.

CXXXV.

If you remember what was said before,
This was the hag who 'scaped out of the cave,
Where Isabella, who had wounded sore
Zerbino's heart, was long detained a slave;
Who oft had told how she her native shore
Had left, and, launching upon ocean's wave
Her frigate, had been wrecked by wind and swell
Upon the rocky shallows near Rochelle.

CXXXVI.

And she to *her* Zerbino's goodly cheer
And gentle features had pourtrayed so well,
That the hag hearing him, and now more near,
Letting her eyes upon his visage dwell,
Discerned it was the youth for whom, whilere,
Had grieved at heart the prisoned Isabel;
Whose loss she in the cavern more deplored,
Than being captive to the murderous horde.

CXXXVII.

The beldam, hearing what in rage and grief
Zerbino vents, perceives the youth to be
Deceived, and cheated by the false belief
That Isabel had perished in the sea;
And though she might have given the prince relief,
Knowing the truth, in her perversity
What would have made him joyful she concealed,
And only what would cause him grief revealed.

CXXXVIII.

" Hear, you that are so proud," (the hag pursues),
" And flout me with such insolence and scorn,
" You would entreat me fair to have the news
" I know of her whose timeless death you mourn;
" But to be strangled would I rather choose,
" And be into a thousand pieces torn.
" Whereas if you had made me kinder cheer,
" Haply from me the secret might you hear."

CXXXIX.

As the dog's rage is quickly overblown,
Who flies the approaching robber to arrest,
If the thief proffer piece of bread or bone,
Or offer other lure which likes him best;
As readily Zerbino to the crone
Humbled himself, and burned to know the rest;
Who, in the hints of that old woman, read
That she had news of her he mourned as dead.

CXL.

And with more winning mien to her applied,
And her did supplicate, entreat, conjure,
By men and gods, the truth no more to hide,
Did she benign or evil lot endure.
The hard and pertinacious crone replied,
" Nought shalt thou hear, thy comfort to assure.
" Isabel has not yielded up her breath,
" But lives a life she would exchange for death.

CXLI.

" She, since thou heardest of her destiny,
" Within few days, has fallen into the power
" Of more than twenty. If restored to thee,
" Think now, if thou hast hope to crop her flower."
—" Curst hag, how well thou shapest thy history,
" Yet knowest it is false! Her virgin dower
" Secure from brutal wrong, would none invade,
" Though in the power of twenty were the maid."

CXLII.

Questioning of the maid, he when and where
She saw her, vainly asked the beldam hoar,
Who, ever restive to Zerbino's prayer,
To what she had rehearsed would add no more.
The prince in the beginning spoke her fair,
And next to cut her throat in fury swore.
But prayers and menaces alike were weak;
Nor could he make the hideous beldam speak.

CXLIII.

At length Zerbino to his tongue gave rest,
Since speaking to the woman booted nought;
Scarcely his heart found room within his breast,
Such dread suspicion had her story wrought.
He to find Isabella was so pressed,
Her in the midst of fire he would have sought;
But could not hurry more than was allowed
By her his convoy, since he so had vowed.

CXLIV.

They hence, by strange and solitary way,
Rove, as the beldam does her will betoken,
Nor climbing, nor descending hill, survey
Each other's face, nor any word is spoken.
But when the sun upon the middle day
Had turned his back, their silence first was broken
By cavalier encountered in their way:
What followed the ensuing strain will say.

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NOTES TO CANTO XX.

1.

Praised is Camilla, with Harpalicè,
For the fair course which they in battle ran.
Corinna and Sappho, famous for their lore,
Shine two illustrious lights, to set no more.
Stanza i. lines 5, 6, 7, 8.

Harpalice was a Thracian virago, who freed her father, made prisoner by the Getæ. Virgil, speaking of her, says,

Vel qualis equos Thrëissa fatigat
Harpalice, volucremque fugâ prævertitur Hebrum.

Camilla has been made too notorious by him in Æneas's Italian Wars to require farther mention. Sappho has as little need of it. Of the Corinnas (as there were three) it is not clear to which Ariosto alludes; probably to her who was the supposed mistress of Ovid, or to the yet more famous woman of that name, who vanquished Pindar in a poetic contest.

2.

When, after twenty years, the Grecian host
Returned from Troy, &c.
Stanza x. lines 1 and 2.

As we have seen Ariosto, in the preceding canto, making up his fable of the Amazons out of different classical stories, so

we may here detect him in the same species of manufacture. We have a jumble and alteration of stories, Messenian, Scythian, and Trojan.

Phalantus, who led off the youth that were the offspring of the Spartan ladies' gallantries, though not during the Trojan war, went straight to Italy, where he founded, or where he restored, Tarentum, as stated by the poet.

3.

And, that they might not freeze alone in bed, &c.

Stanza x. line 7.

Non ego deserto jacuissem frigida lecto.

OVID.

4.

The Cretans, who had banished in that day Idomeneus.

Stanza xiv. lines 1 and 2.

Fama volat pulsum regnis cessisse paternis
Idomenea ducem.

VIRGIL.

5.

A captive made by her own prisoner.

Stanza xxxix. line 8.

Victorem victæ succubuisse queror.

OVID.

·6.

Scarcely Lycaon's child, her furrow done,
Has turned about her ploughshare in the sky, &c.
Stanza lxxxii. lines 3 and 4.

Calisto, daughter of Lycaon, who having been violated by Jupiter, was, by Juno, metamorphosed into a she-bear, and again by Jupiter into the constellation called the Bear, or Bootes' Wain; and as this constellation only disappears towards morning, the poet designates the dawn by the retreat of Calisto, whom he describes as turning her plough, instead of her wain, in order to depart: for this constellation taking its name from the position of some of its stars resembling *that* of oxen in harness, might perhaps as fairly be likened to one as to the other.

This story of the Amazons (more especially Guido's relation) may serve as a specimen of that tone of prosing and repetition with which Ariosto has been reproached. I cannot, however, at all agree with those who condemn *him* for the 'lungaggini' which are usually objected to the Italian writers. I suspect him of much cunning and design in many of his apparent defects, especially in his prosing, and am much pleased to find that I am supported in this opinion by the late Mr. Fox; as I learn from *his* high authority, who must be the best depository of that accomplished man's opinions. The reader may here remark, in support of such an idea, that the poet is infinitely more succinct in his own recital of things than he has made others; as Pinnabello in the narration of the loss of his mistress in one of the first cantos, and Guido in the present. This was well; as I have remarked, in Pinnabello's case, and is well in Guido's; for Guido may be naturally supposed to be much more interested in these *quorum pars magna fuit* than the author; and, besides, he has his hearers at his mercy; he has them at his own table.

"I know the man who must hear me,
"To him my tale I teach."

I do not mean to insinuate, however, that Ariosto does not often prose in *propriâ personâ*: but I believe, as I have suggested in my preface, that he proses, like Defoe, to intent and purpose. What would the history of Robinson Crusoe be worth without its diffuseness and its circumstantiality? In a play we do not look upon poetry as the predominant excellence of the author; nor should we make it the *single* qualification of the romancer. Ariosto often considers the developement of manners or passion as a more striking consideration, though, when there is an opening for poetry, without prejudice to the truth of story, no one is better instructed in the art:

quâ se quaque possit
Tollere humo, victorque virum volitare per ora.'

7.

" *It was a damsel's blow*
" *Which from thy lofty saddle laid thee low.*"
Stanza cxxix. lines 7 and 8.

So the courier who is pursuing Bradamant, mortifies Sacripant by telling him, much in the same words, that it was a damsel who had unhorsed him.

8.

Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,
Hangs down his ears.
Stanza cxxxi. lines 7 and 8.

Demitto auriculas ut iniquæ mentis asellus.
HORACE.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

Zerbino for Gabrina, who a heart
Of asp appears to bear, contends. O'erthrown,
The Fleming falls upon the other part,
Through cause of that despised and odious crone.
He wounded sore, and writhing with the smart,
The beldam's treason to the prince makes known,
Whose scorn and hatred hence derive new force.
Towards loud cries Zerbino spurs his horse.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXI.

I.

No cord I well believe is wound so tight
Round chest, nor nails the plank so fastly hold,
As Faith enwraps an honourable sprite
In its secure, inextricable, fold;
Nor holy Faith, it seems, except in white
Was mantled over in the days of old;
So by the ancient limner ever painted,
As by one speck, one single blemish tainted[1].

II.

Faith should be kept unbroken evermore,
With one or with a thousand men united;
As well if given in grot or forest hoar,
Remote from town and hamlet, as if plighted
Amid a crowd of witnesses, before
Tribunal, and in act and deed recited:
Nor needs the solemn sanction of an oath:
It is sufficient that we pledge our troth.

III.

And this maintains as it maintained should be,
In each emprize the Scottish cavalier*,
And gives good proof of his fidelity,
Quitting his road with that old crone to steer;
Although this breeds the youth such misery,
As 'twould to have Disease itself as near,
Or even Death; but with him heavier weighed
Than his desire the promise he had made.

IV.

Of him I told who felt at heart such load,
Reflecting she beneath his charge must go,
He spake no word; and thus in silent mode
Both fared: so sullen was Zerbino's woe.
I said how next their silence, as they rode,
Was broke, when Sol his hindmost wheels did show,
By an adventurous errant cavalier,
Who in mid pathway met the crone and peer.

V.

The hag, who the approaching warrior knew,
(Hermonides of Holland he was hight)
That bore upon a field of sable hue
A bar of vermeil tint, transversely dight,
Did humbly now to good Zerbino sue,
—Her pride abased, and look of haught despite—
And him reminded of the promise made,
When her Marphisa to his care conveyed.

VI.

Because as foe to *her* and *hers* she knew
The knight they were encountering, who had slain
Her only brother and her father true;
And was advised, the traitor would be fain
By her, the remnant of her race, to do
What he had perpetrated on the twain.
" Woman, while guarded by my arm (he said),
" I will not thou shouldst any danger dread."

VII.

As nearer now, the stranger knight espied
That face, which was so hateful in his sight,
With menacing and savage voice he cried,
" Either with me prepare thyself to fight,
" Or arm thee not on that old woman's side,
" Who by my hand shall perish, as is right.
" If thou contendest for her, thou art slain;
" For such their portion is who wrong maintain."

VIII.

Him young Zerbino answered courteously,
' Twas sign of evil and ungenerous will,
' And corresponded not with chivalry,
' That he a woman should desire to kill;
' Yet if the knight persists, he will not flee—
' But bids him well consider first how ill
' 'Twould sound, that he, a gentle knight and good,
' Should wish to dip his hand in woman's blood.'

IX.

This and yet more he vainly says; nor stand
They idle long; from word they pass to deed;
And having compassed on the level land
Enough of ground, encounter on the mead.
Not fired in some rejoicing, from the hand
Discharged, so fast the whistling rockets speed,
As the two coursers bear the cavaliers
To hurtle in mid space with rested spears.

X.

Hermonides of Holland levelled low,
And for the youth's left flank the stroke intended;
But his weak lance was shivered by the blow,
And little the opposing Scot offended:
But vain was not the spear-thrust of his foe,
Who bored his opposite's good shield, and rended
His shoulder, by the lance pierced through and through,
And good Hermonides on earth o'erthrew.

XI.

Thinking him slain who only lay amazed,
By pity prest, Zerbino leapt to ground,
And from his deathlike face the vizor raised;
And he, as wakened out of sleep profound,
In silence, hard upon Zerbino gazed;
Then cried, " It does not me, in truth, confound,
" To think that I am overthrown by thee,
" Who seem'st the flower of errant chivalry.

XII.

" But it with reason grieves me this is done
" Upon account of a false woman's spite;
" Whose wicked cause I know not why you own,
" An office ill according with your might:
" And when to you the occasion shall be known
" Which urges me her wickedness to quite,
" Whene'er you think on it, you will repent
" How she by you was saved, and I was shent.

XIII.

" And if enough of breath, although I fear
" The contrary, is left me to expound
" Her evil actions, I shall make appear
" She in all guilt transgresses every bound.
" I had a brother once: the youthful peer
" Set out from Holland's isle, our natal ground,
" To serve Heraclius, 'mid his knights arrayed,
" Who then the Grecian empire's sceptre swayed.

XIV.

" Brother in arms and bosom-friend installed
" Here was he by a baron of that court,
" Who, in a pleasant site, and strongly walled,
" On Servia's distant frontier had a fort.
" Argæus he of whom I tell was called,
" Husband of that ill hag, whom in such sort
" He loved, as passed all mean, and misbecame
" One of his worth and honourable fame.

XV.

" But she, more volatile than leaf, when breeze
" Of autumn most its natural moisture dries[2],
" And strips the fluttering foliage from the trees,
" Which, blown about, before its fury flies,
" Changes her humour, and her husband sees,
" Whom she some time had loved, with other eyes,
" And in her every wish and every thought
" Schemes how my brother's love may best be bought.

XVI.

" But not Acroceraunus fronts the brine,
" —Ill-famed—against whose base the billow heaves,
" Nor against Boreas stands the mountain pine,
" That has a hundred times renewed its leaves,
" And towering high on Alp or Apennine,
" With its fast root the rock as deeply cleaves,
" So firmly as the youth resists the will
" Of that foul woman, sink of every ill.

XVII.

" Now, as it oft befalls a cavalier
" Who seeks and finds adventure, high and low,
" It happened that my gentle brother near
" His comrade's fort was wounded by a foe;
" Where often, uninvited by the peer,
" He guested, was his host with him or no;
" And thither he resorted from the field,
" There to repose until his wounds were healed.

XVIII.

" While there he wounded lay, upon some need
" It chanced Argæus was compelled to ride.
" Quickly that wanton, from his presence freed,
" As was her use, my brother's fealty tried.
" But he, as one unstained in thought and deed,
" So fell a goad no longer would abide;
" And to preserve his faith, as lures increased,
" Of many evils chose what seemed the least.

XIX.

" To break communion with the cavalier,
" To him—of many—seemed the lightest ill,
" And go so far, *that* wanton should not hear
" More of his name: this purpose to fulfil
" Was honester (though quitting one so dear
" Was hard) than to content her evil will,
" Or her foul wishes to her lord impart,
" Who cherished her as fondly as his heart.

XX.

" And though yet smarting with his wounds and pined,
" He dons his arms, and from the tower departs;
" And wanders thence with firm and constant mind,
" Ne'er to return again into those parts.
" But nought availed the purpose he designed;
" His projects Fortune baffled with new arts.
" This while, behold! the castellain returned,
" And bathed in bitter tears the wife discerned.

XXI.

" And with flushed face, and hair in disarray,
" He asks of her what had disturbed her mood;
" Who, ere she in reply a word will say,
" Is vainly more than once to answer wooed;
" And all the while is thinking in what way
" The knight can best with vengeance be pursued.
" And well it suited with her fickle vein,
" Lightly to change her love into disdain.

XXII.

' Ah! why should I conceal (in fine she cried)
' The fault committed while you were away?
' For though I it from all the world should hide,
' This would my conscience to myself bewray.
' The soul, which is with secret evil dyed,
' Does with such penitence its fault appay [5],
' As every corporal sufferance exceeds
' That thou couldst deal me for my evil deeds;

XXIII.

' If evil *be* the deed, when done parforce.
' But, be it what it may, the mischief know;
' Then, with thy sword from this polluted corse,
' Delivered, let my spotless spirit go;
' And quench these wretched eyes, which in remorse,
' I, if I lived, on earth must ever throw,
' As the least penance of so foul a blame,
' And, look on whom they may, must blush for shame.

XXIV.

' My honour has been ruined by thy mate,
' Who to this body violence has done,
' And fearing lest I all to thee relate,
' Without farewell the graceless churl is gone.'
" She by this story made her husband hate
" The youth, than whom before was dearer none.
" Argæus credits all, without delay
" Arms him, and, breathing vengeance, posts away.

XXV.

" In knowledge of that country not to seek,
" He overtook the knight in little space;
" For my poor brother, yet diseased and weak,
" Rode, unsuspicious, at an easy pace;
" Argæus, eager his revenge to wreak,
" Assailed him straight in a sequestered place.
" My brother would excuse him if he might,
" But his indignant host insists on fight.

XXVI.

" *This* one was sound and full of new disdain,
" *That* weak and friendly, as aye wont to be:
" My brother was ill fitted to sustain
" His altered comrade's new-born enmity.
" Philander, then unmeriting such pain,
" (So was the stripling named, described by me)
" Not gifted with the power to undergo
" Such fierce assault, was taken by the foe.

XXVII.

' Forbid it Heaven ! I should be led astray
' So by just wrath and thy iniquity,
' (To him Argæus cried) as thee to slay,
' Who loved thee once, and certes thou loved'st me,
' Though in the end thou ill didst this display,
' I yet desire this ample world may see
' That, measured by my deeds, I rank above
' Thyself in hate as highly as in love.

XXVIII.

' In other mode shall I chastise the deed,
' Than spilling more of thine ill blood.' " The peer,
" This said, commands his followers, on a steed,
" Of verdant boughs composed, to place a bier,
" And with the knight half-lifeless homeward speed,
" And in a tower enclose the cavalier;
" There dooms the guiltless stripling to remain,
" And suffer prisonment's perpetual pain.

XXIX.

" Yet nothing but his former liberty
" Thence to depart was wanting to the knight;
" In all the rest, as one at large and free,
" He ordered, and was still obeyed aright.
" But that ill dame her former phantasy
" Pursuing ever with unwearied sprite,
" Having the keys, repaired nigh every day
" To the close turret where the prisoner lay.

XXX.

" And evermore my brother she assailed,
" And with more boldness prest her former suit.
' Mark what to thee fidelity availed!'
(She cries,) ' which all mere perfidy repute.
' With what triumphant joy shalt thou be hailed!
' What noble spoils are thine, what happy fruit!
' Oh what a worthy guerdon is thy meed!
' Branded by all men for a traitor's deed!

XXXI.

' How well thou mightst have given, and without stain
' Of thine own honour, what I sought of thee!
' Now of so rigorous mood the worthy gain
' Have and enjoy. In close captivity
' Thou art; nor ever hope to break thy chain,
' Unless thou soften thy obduracy.
' But, if compliant, I a mean can frame
' To render thee thy liberty and fame.'

XXXII.

' No, no; have thou no hope,' (replied the knight,)
' That my true faith shall ever change, although
' It thus should happen that, against all right,
' I should so hard a sentence undergo.
' Let the world blame. Enough that in HIS sight,
' —Who sees and judges every thing below,
' And in HIS grace divine my fame can clear—
' My innocence unsullied shall appear.

XXXIII.

'Does not Argæus deem enough to sty
'Me in his prison, let him take away
'This noisome life. Nor yet may Heaven deny
'Its meed, though ill the world my work appay.
'And yet he who condemns me may, when I
'Am parted from this tenement of clay,
'Perceive that he has wronged me in the end,
'And shall bewail when dead his faithful friend.'

XXXIV.

"Thus oftentimes that shameless woman prest
"The good Philander, but obtained no fruit.
"Nursing her blind desires, which know not rest
"In seeking what her wicked love may boot,
"She her old vices, in her inmost breast,
"Ransacks for what may best the occasion suit,
"And sifts them all: then, having overrun
"A thousand evil thoughts, resolved on one.

XXXV.

"Six months she waited ere again she sought
"The prisoner's tower, as she was wont before:
"From which the sad Philander hoped and thought
"That love to him the dame no longer bore.
"Lo! Fortune for her an occasion wrought,
"(To evil deed propitious evermore)
"To give effect, with memorable ill,
"To her irrational and evil will.

XXXVI.

" The husband had an ancient feud with one
" Who was by name Morando hight the fair;
" Who even within the fort would often run
" In its lord's absence; but the knight's repair
" At the wide distance of ten miles would shun,
" Was he assured the castellain was there:
" Who now, to lure him thither, bruited how
" He for Jerusalem was bound by vow.

XXXVII.

" Said he would go; and went. Thus each who spies
" His outset, of his journey spreads the fame:
" Nor he, who only on his wife relies,
" Trusts any with his purpose but the dame,
" And home returned when dusky waxed the skies;
" Nor ever, save at evening, thither came;
" And with changed ensigns, at the dawn of day,
" Unseen of any, always went his way.

XXXVIII.

" He now on this, now on the other side,
" Roved round his castle but to ascertain
" If credulous Morando, who to ride
" Thither was wonted, would return again.
" All day he in the forest used to hide,
" And, when he saw the sun beneath the main,
" Came to the tower, and, through a secret gate,
" Was there admitted by his faithless mate.

XXXIX.

" Thus every one, except his consort ill,
" Argæus many miles away suppose:
" She, when 'tis time her errand to fulfil,
" Hatching new mischief, to my brother goes.
" Of tears she has a ready shower at will,
" Which from her eyes into her bosom flows.
' —Where shall I succour find, now needed most,
' So that my honour be not wholly lost,

XL.

' And, with my own, my wedded lord's?' (she cries;)
' I should feel no alarm, if he were here.
' Thou knowst Morando, know if deities
' Or men he in Argæus' absence fear.
' He at this time tries all extremities;
' Nor servant have I but by threat or prayer
' He him to further his desire has swayed;
' Nor know I whither to recur for aid.

XLI.

' Of my lord's absence hearing the report,
' And that he would not quickly homeward fare,
' He had the insolence within my court,
' Upon no other pretext to repair;
' Who, were my absent lord within his fort,
' So bold a deed not only would not dare,
' But would not deem himself secure withal,
' By Heaven! at three miles' distance from his wall.

XLII.

'And what he erst by messenger had sought,
'From me to-day has sued for face to face;
'And in such manner that long time I thought
'Dishonour must have followed and disgrace;
'And if I had not humbly him besought,
'And feigned to yield to him with ready grace,
'He haply would have ravished *that* by force,
'Which he expects to win by milder course.

XLIII.

'I promise, not designing to comply,
'For void is contract made in fear; alone
'From his ill purpose would I put him by,
'And what he then parforce would else have done.
'So stands the case: the single remedy
'Lies in yourself: my honour else is gone,
'And that of my Argæus; which as dear,
'Or more so, than your own you vowed whilere.

XLIV.

'If you refuse me, I shall say, you show
'That you have not the faith which you pretended,
'But that in cruelty you said me no,
'When vainly were my tears on you expended,
'And no wise for Argæus' sake, although
'With this pretext you have yourself defended.
'Our loves had been concealed and free from blame;
'But hefe I stand exposed to certain shame.'

XLV.

' To me such preface needs not (said anew
' The good Philander), bound by amity
' To my Argæus still; thy pleasure shew:
' I what I ever was will be, and I,
' Although from him I bear such ill undue,
' Accuse him not; for him would I defy
' Even death itself; and let the world, allied
' With my ill destiny, against me side!'

XLVI.

" The impious woman answered, ' 'Tis my will
' Thou slay him who would do us foul despite;
' Nor apprehend to encounter any ill:
' For I the certain mean will tell aright.
' He will return, his purpose to fulfil,
' At the third hour, when darkest is the night;
' And, at a preconcerted signal made,
' Be without noise by me within conveyed.

XLVII.

' Let it not irk thee to await the peer
' Within my chamber, where no light will be;
' Till I shall make him doff his warlike gear,
' And, almost naked, yield him up to thee.'
" So did his wife into that quicksand steer
" Her hapless husband (it appears to me)
" If wife she rightly could be called; more fell
" And cruel than a fury sprung from hell!

XLVIII.

" She drew my brother forth, that guilty night,
" With his good arms in hand, and him again
" Secreted in the chamber without light,
" Till thither came the wretched castellain.
" As it was ordered, all fell out aright,
" For seldom ill design is schemed in vain.
" So fell Argæus by Philander's sword,
" Who for Morando took the castle's lord.

XLIX.

" One blow divided head and neck; for nought
" Was there of helm, the warrior to defend.
" Without a struggle was Argæus brought
" To his unhappy life's disastrous end.
" And he who slew him never had such thought,
" Nor this would have believed: to aid his friend
" Intent, (strange chance!) he wrought him in that blow
" The worst that could be done by mortal foe.

L.

" When now, unknown, on earth Argæus lay,
" My brother to Gabrina gave the blade,
" (So was she named) who lived but to betray.
" She, who discovery had till then delayed,
" Wills that Philander with a light survey
" The man whom he on earth has lifeless laid,
" And she, with the assistanee of the light,
" Shows him Argæus in the murdered wight.

LI.

" And threatens, save he with desires comply
" To which her bosom had been long a prey,
" What he would be unable to deny
" She to the assembled household will display,
" And he like traitor and assassin die,
" Upon her tale, in ignominious way:
" And minds him fame is not to be despised,
" Albeit so little life by him be prized.

LII.

" Philander stood oppressed with grief and fear,
" When his mistake to him the woman showed,
" And to have slain her in his wrath went near,
" And long he doubted, so his choler glowed;
" And, but that Reason whispered in his ear
" That he was in an enemy's abode,
" For lack of faulchion in his empty sheath,
" He would have torn her piece-meal with his teeth.

LIII.

" As sometimes vessel by two winds which blow
" From different points is vext upon the main[4],
" And now one speeds the bark an end, and now
" Another squall impels her back again;
" Still on her poop assailed, or on her prow,
" Till she before the strongest flies amain:
" Philander, so distraught by two designs,
" Takes what he pregnant with least ill opines.

LIV.

" Reason demonstrates with what peril fraught
" His case, not more with death than lasting stain,
" If in the castle were that murder taught;
" Nor any time has he to sift his brain.
" Will he or nill he, in conclusion nought
" Is left him but the bitter cup to drain.
" Thus in his troubled heart prevailing more,
" His fear his resolution overbore.

LV.

" The fear of shameful punishment's pursuit
" Made him with many protestations swear
" To grant in every thing Gabrina's suit,
" If from the fortilage they safely fare.
" So plucks that impious dame, parforce, the fruit
" Of her desires, and thence retreat the pair.
" Thus home again the young Philander came,
" Leaving behind him a polluted name;

LVI.

" And deeply graven in his bosom bore
" The image of his friend so rashly slain;
" By this to purchase, to his torment sore,
" A Progne, a Medea; impious gain!
" —And but his knightly faith, and oaths he swore,
" Were to his fury as a curbing rein,
" From him when safe she would have met her fate;
" But lived subjected to his bitterest hate.

LVII.

" Thenceforth he nevermore was seen to smile:
" All his discourse was sad, and still ensued
" Sobs from his breast; afflicted in the style
" Of vext Orestes, when he in his mood
" Had slain his mother and Ægysthus vile;
" By vengeful furies for the deed pursued.
" Till broken by the ceaseless grief he fed,
" He sickened and betook himself to bed.

LVIII.

" Now in the harlot, when she had discerned
" This other set by her so little store,
" The former amorous flame was quickly turned
" Into despiteous rage and hatred sore;
" Nor with less wrath she towards my brother burned
" Than for Argæus she had felt before;
" And she disposed herself, in treasons versed,
" To slay her second husband like the first.

LIX.

" Of a deceitful leech she made assay*,
" Well fitted for the work she had in hand,
" Who better knew what deadly poisons slay
" Than he the force of healing syrup scanned;
" And promised him his service to repay
" With a reward exceeding his demand,
" When he should, with some drink of deadly might,
" Of her detested husband rid her sight.

LX.

" In presence of myself and more beside,
" The wicked elder, with his deadly dole,
" Approaching my unhappy brother, cried,
' It was a sovereign drink to make him whole.'
" But here a new device Gabrina tried,
" And, ere the sickly man could taste the bowl,
" To rid her of accomplice in the deed,
" Or to defraud him of his promised meed,

LXI.

" Seized on his hand, the instant he presented
" The poison to my brother. ' Ill my fear,
(Exclaimed the dame) ' by you would be resented,
' Excited for a spouse I hold so dear.
' I, that the beverage has not been fermented
' With evil drug and poisonous, will be clear;
' Nor deem it meet that you to him convey
' The proffered bowl, unless you take the 'say [6]

LXII.

" In what condition think you, sir, remained
" The wretched elder by his fears opprest?
" Thus by the woman's suddenness constrained,
" He had no time for thinking what were best.
" He, lest more doubt of him be entertained,
" Tastes of the chalice, at Gabrina's hest;
" And the sick man, emboldened so, drinks up
" All the remainder of the poisoned cup [7].

LXIII.

" As the trained hawk of crooked talon who
" Clutches the partridge, when about to eat,
" Is by the dog, she deems her comrade true,
" O'ertaken and defrauded of the meat;
" So on ill gain intent, the leech, in lieu
" Of the expected aid, received defeat.
" Hear, thus, what sovereign wickedness will dare,
" And be like fate each greedy miscreant's share!

LXIV.

" This past and done, the leech would homeward speed,
" That he, to counteract the pest he bore
" Within his bowels, in this fearful need,
" Might use some secret of his cunning lore;
" But this the wicked dame would not concede,
" Forbidding him to issue thence before
" His patient's stomach should the juice digest,
" And its restoring power be manifest[8].

LXV.

" No prayer will move, nor offered price will buy
" The woman's leave to let him thence depart.
" The desperate man who saw that death was nigh,
" And sure to follow, quickly changed his part;
" And told the story to the standers-by;
" Nor could she cover it with all her art.
" Thus what he wont to do by many a one,
" That goodly doctor by himself has done;

LXVI.

" And follows with his soul my brother true,
" That hence, already freed, was gone before.
" We, the assistants, that the matter knew
" From the old man who lingered little more,
" Took that abominable monster, who
" More cruel was than beast in forest hoar,
" And, prisoned in a darksome place, reserved
" To perish in the fire, as she deserved."

LXVII.

So said Hermonides, and had pursued
His tale, and told how she from prison fled;
But suffered from his wound a pang so shrewd,
He fell reversed upon his grassy bed.
Meanwhile two squires, who served him in the wood,
A rustic bier of sturdy branches spread;
Their master upon this the servants lay,
Who could not thence be borne in other way.

LXVIII.

Zerbino, in excuse, assured the peer,
' He grieved so good a knight to have offended;
' But, as was still the use of cavalier,
' Had guarded her who in his guidance wended;
' Nor had he else preserved his honour clear:
' For when the dame was to his care commended,
' Her to defend his promise he had plight
' From all men, to the utmost of his might.

LXIX.

'He, if he might, in any thing beside,
'Would readily assist him in his need.'
—'His only wish,' (the cavalier replied,)
'Was, *he* might be from ill Gabrina freed,
'Ere him some mighty mischief should betide,
'Of future penitence the bitter seed.'
Gabrina keeps on earth her downcast eye;
For ill the simple truth admits reply.

LXX.

Zerbino thence, upon the promised way,
With the old woman in his escort, went,
And inly cursed her all the livelong day,
That in her cause that baron he had shent.
And having heard the knight her guilt display,
Who was instructed in her evil bent,
He—if before he had her at despite—
So loathed her, she was poison to his sight.

LXXI.

Well read in young Zerbino's hate, the dame
Would not by him in malice be outdone,
Nor bated him an inch, but in that game
Of deadly hatred set him two for one.
Her face was with the venom in a flame
Wherewith her swelling bosom overrun.
'Twas thus and in such concord as I say
These through the ancient wood pursued their way.

LXXII.

When, lo! as it is now nigh eventide,
They a mixt sound of blows and outcries hear,
Which seem a sign of battle fiercely plied,
And (as the deafening noise demonstrates) near.
To mark what this might be, towards that side
Whence came the tumult, moved the Scottish peer;
Nor is in following him Gabrina slow:
What chanced in other canto you shall know.

NOTES TO CANTO XXI.

Nor holy Faith, it seems, except in white
Was mantled over in the days of old;
So by the ancient limner's pencil ever painted,
As by one speck, one single blemish tainted.
Stanza i. lines 5, 6, 7, 8.

Et albo rara Fides colit
Velata panno.
HORACE.

2.

But she, more volatile than leaf, when breeze
Of autumn most its natural moisture dries, &c.
Stanza xv. lines 1 and 2.

Tu levior foliis tunc cum sine pondere succi
Mobilibus ventis arida facta volant,

says Ovid; who more than once repeats this allusion.

3.

The soul, which is with secret evil dyed,
Does with such penitence its fault appay, &c.
Stanza xxii. lines 5 and 6.

Evasisse putas, quos diri conscia facti,
Mens habet attonitos et surdo verbere cœdit,

Occulto quatiente animam tortore flagello?
Pœna autem vehemens ac multo sævior illis,
Quas et Sedicius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum portare in pectore testem.
JUVENAL.

4.

As sometimes vessel by two winds which blow
From different points is vext upon the main, &c.
Stanza liii. lines 1 and 2.

Ariosto has taken this simile, with some little variation, from Silius Italicus.

Non graviore movent venti certamina mole
Adrysius Boreas, et, Syrtim tollere pollens,
Africus, obnixi cum bella furentia torquent.
Distraxere fretum, ac diversa ad littora volvunt
Æquor quisque suum: sequitur stridente procellâ
Nunc huc, nunc illuc, raptim mare et intonat undis.

5.

Of a deceitful leech, &c.
Stanza lix. line 1.

Ariosto has taken this incident from the *Golden Ass* of Apulcius, whom he has copied in many of his details, as will be seen in this and the succeeding notes. 'Sed uxor, quæ jam pridem nomen uxoris cum fide perdiderat, medicum convenit notæ perfidiæ, qui jam multarum palmarum spectatus præliis, magna dextræ suæ trophæa numerabat; eique protinus quinquaginta promittit sestertia, ut ille quidem momentarium venenum venderet, illa autem emeret mariti sui mortem.'

6.

The poet has followed Apuleius yet more closely in the next stanzas.

" *In presence of myself and more beside,*
" *The aged prisoner, with his deadly dole,*
" *Approaching my unhappy brother, cried,*
' *It was a sovereign drink to make him whole.*'
" *But here a new device Gabrina tried,*
" *And, ere the sickly man could taste the bowl,*'
" *To rid her of accomplice in the deed,*
" *Or to defraud him of his promised meed,*

" *Seized on his hand, the instant he presented*
" *The poison to my brother.* ' *Ill my fear,*
(*Exclaimed the dame*) ' *by you would be resented,*
' *Excited for a spouse I hold so dear.*
' *I, that the beverage has not been fermented*
' *With evil drug and poisonous, will be clear;*
' *Nor deem it meet that you to him convey*
' *The proffered bowl, unless you take the 'say.*

Stanzas lx. and lxi.

"Jamque, præsente familiâ, et inde nonnullis amicis et affinibus, ægroto poculum medicus probe temperatum manu suâ porrigebat: sed audax illa mulier, ut simul et conscium sceleris amoliretur et quam desponderat pecuniam lucraretur, detento calice, ' Non prius (inquit) mędicorum optime, non prius charissimo mihi marito trades istam potionem quam de hac bonam partem hauseris ipse. Unde enim sciam, an noxium in eâ lateat venenum: quæ res utique te tam prudentem tamque doctum virum nequaquam offendat; si religiosa uxor circa salutem mariti sollicitam necessariam offero pietatem.'"

unless you take the say,

(In the original,

se non ne fai tu il saggio)

is an idiom which shows the occasional necessity for resort-

ing to the time of Elizabeth in search of equivalents for phrases relating to customs now disused. The phrase of *to take the 'say* (a taste of the meat as a precaution against poison) is common in our old writers.

7.

In what condition think you, sir, remained
The wretched elder by his fears opprest?
Thus by the woman's suddenness constrained,
He had no time for thinking what were best.
He, lest more doubt of him be entertained,
Tastes of the chalice, at Gabrina's hest;
And the sick man, emboldened so, drinks up
All the remainder of the poisoned cup.

Stanza lxii.

In this stanza we have the same close imitation.

"Quâ mirâ desperatione truculentæ fœminæ repente perturbatus medicus, excussusque toto consilio, et, ob angustiam temporis, spatio cogitandi privatus, antequam trepidatione aliquâ vel cunctatione ipsâ daret malæ conscientiæ suspicionem, ibidem de potione gustat ampliter; quam fidem sequutus adolescens, et sumpto calice, quod afferebatur hausit."

8.

This past and done, the leech would homeward speed,
That he, to counteract the pest he bore
Within his bowels, in this fearful need,
Might use some secret of his cunning lore;
But this the wicked dame would not concede,
Forbidding him to issue thence before
His patient's stomach should the juice digest,
And its restoring power be manifest.

Stanza lxiv.

In this stanza, Ariosto has again followed closely in the footsteps of Apuleius.

" Ad istum modum præsenti transacto negotio, medicus quam ocissime domum remeabat, salutiferâ potione pestem præcedentis veneni festinans extinguere; nec eum obstinatione sacrilegâ, quâ semel cœperat truculenta mulier, ungue latius a se discedere passa est; ' Priusquam (inquit) digestâ potione, medicinæ eventus probatus appareat.' "

Such are the incidents which Ariosto has borrowed; there are, however, many circumstances of invention in this episode, such as the simile of the hawk and dog, &c. which, giving his peculiarity of touch to the picture, show how well he could assimilate and make his own whatever foreign graces he thought worthy of adoption. I may here remark with what felicity and discrimination he always paints the character of woman; the fidelity and fondness of Isabella, the coquetry of Angelica, the exalted character of Olympia, uncompromising in her love or hate, and the abandoned wickedness of Gabrina, a true though fearful picture of what woman is, when she utterly abandons the reins to her passions. This discrimination appears to me strikingly exemplified in the character of his two viragos. Bradamant and Marphisa, though equally brave, and, by the vagrant and unfeminine life which they lead, equally subjected to the same coarse suspicions, always appear to us in very different lights. The mere circumstance of his having armed the one with a golden spear, with which she tilts her enemies out of their saddles, and the other with a sabre to hack and hew, makes all the difference. If one could love an Amazon, it would be Bradamant; but one might as well think of falling in love with Moll of Flanders as with Marphisa. A late very ingenious periodical critic blames Ariosto for having made as little distinction between the characteristics of his heroes, as Virgil has between his *fortemque Gyan fortemque Cloanthum;* but I give the poet the same credit for his delineation of male as of female mind, and should say, that he was in this respect rather to be compared to Homer than to Virgil; that Ruggero no more resembles Gradasso than Hector does Diomed; and that even in the attribute of courage, the quality

in which Ariosto's heroes must necessarily most resemble each other, a marked and striking distinction is visible. This is remarkable in those between whom there is most resemblance —as in Mandricardo and Rodomont, and Orlando and Rinaldo, &c. &c. This is also yet more worthy of admiration; inasmuch as Ariosto has, well or ill, subjected himself to embarrassing restrictions. For having adopted the *dramatis personæ* of the Innamorato, he, probably from greater refinement of taste, thought it necessary to soften down their prominence of character; and to do this, without obliterating their features, was to overcome no ordinary difficulty.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTÓ XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Atlantes' magic towers Astolpho wight
Destroys, and frees his thralls from prison-cell.
Bradamant finds Rogero, who in fight
O'erthrows four barons from the warlike sell,
When on their way to save an errant knight
Doomed to devouring fire: the four who fell
For impious Pinnabel maintained the strife,
Whom, after, Bradamant deprives of life.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXII.

I.

Ye courteous dames, and to your lovers dear,
You that are with one single love content;
Though, 'mid so many and many, it is clear
Right few of you are of such constant bent;
Be not displeased at what I said whilere,
When I so bitterly Gabrina shent,
Nor if I yet expend some other verse
In censure of the beldam's mind perverse.

II.

Such was she; and I hide not what is true;
So was enjoined me for a task by one
Whose will is law; therefore is honour due
To constant heart throughout my story done.
He who betrayed his master to the Jew
For thirty pence, nor Peter wronged, nor John,
Nor less renowned is Hypermnestra's fame,
For her so many wicked sisters shame[1].

III.

For one I dare to censure in my lays,
For so the story wills which I recite,
On the other hand, a hundred will I praise,
And make their virtue dim the sun's fair light;
But turning to the various pile I raise,
(Gramercy! dear to many) of the knight
Of Scotland I was telling, who hard-by
Had heard, as was rehearsed, a piercing cry.

IV.

He entered, 'twixt two hills, a narrow way,
From whence was heard the cry; nor far had hied,
Ere to a vale he came shut out from day,
Where he before him a dead knight espied.
Who I shall tell; but first I must away
From France, in the Levant to wander wide,
Till I the paladin Astolpho find,
Who westward had his course from thence inclined.

V.

I in the cruel city left the peer,
Whence, with the formidable bugle's roar,
He had chased the unfaithful people in their fear,
And had preserved himself from peril sore;
And with the sound had made his comrades rear
Their sail, and fly with noted scorn that shore.
Now following him, I say, the warrior took
The Armenian road, and so that land forsook.

VI.

He, after some few days, in Natoly
Finds himself, and towards Brusa goes his ways;
Hence wending, on the hither side o' the sea,
Makes Thrace; through Hungary by the Danube lays
His course, and, as his horse had wings to flee,
Traverses in less time than twenty days
Both the Moravian and Bohemian line:
Threaded Franconia next, and crost the Rhine.

VII.

To Aix-la-Chapelle thence, through Arden's wood,
Came and embarked upon the Flemish strand[2].
To sea, with southern breeze his vessel stood[3];
And, so the favouring wind her canvas fanned,
That he, at little distance, Albion viewed
By noon, and disembarked upon her land.
He backed his horse, and so the rowels plied,
In London he arrived by even-tide.

VIII.

Here, learning afterwards that Otho old
Has lain for many months in Paris-town,
And that anew nigh every baron bold
Has after his renowned example done,
He straightway does for France his sails unfold,
And to the mouth of Thames again is gone.
Whence issuing forth, with all his canvas spread,
For Calais he directs the galley's head.

IX.

A breeze which, from the starboard blowing light,
Had tempted forth Astolpho's bark to sea,
By little and by little, waxed in might,
And so at last obtains the mastery,
The pilot is constrained to veer outright,
Lest by the billows swampt his frigate be,
And he, departing from his first design,
Keeps the bark straight before the cresting brine.

X.

Now to the right, now to the other hand,
Sped by the tempest, through the foaming main,
The vessel ran; she took the happy land
At last nigh Rouen; and forthwith, in chain
And plate Astolpho cased, and girt with brand,
Bade put the saddle upon Rabicane;
Departed thence, and (what availed him more
Than thousands armed) with him his bugle bore;

XI.

And traversing a forest, at the feet
Of a fair hill, arrived beside a font,
What time the sheep foregoes his grassy meat,
Penned in the cabin or the hollow mount;
And, overcome by feverish thirst and heat,
Lifted the weighty morion from his front;
Tethered his courser in the thickest wood,
And, with intent to drink, approached the flood.

XII.

His lips he had not wetted in its bed
Before a youthful rustic, ambushed near,
Sprang from a copse, backed Rabican, and fled
With the good courser of the cavalier.
Astolpho hears the noise and lifts his head,
And, when he sees his mighty loss so clear,
Satiate, although he has not drunk, upstarts,
And after the young churl in fury darts.

XIII.

That robber did not let the courser strain
At speed, or he had from the warrior shot;
But loosening now and tightening now the rein,
Fled at a gallop or a steady trot.
From the deep forest issued forth the twain,
After long round, and reached in fine the spot
Where so many illustrious lords were shent:
Worse prisoners they than if in prison pent!

XIV.

On Rabican, who with the wind might race,
The villain sped, within the enchanter's won.
Impeded by his shield and iron case,
Parforce Astolpho far behind him run;
Yet there arrives as well, but every trace
Of what the warrior had pursued is gone.
He neither Rabican nor thief can meet,
And vainly rolls his eyes and plies his feet.

XV.

He plies his feet, and searches still in vain
Throughout the house, hall, bower, or galleried rows:
Yet labours evermore, with fruitless pain
And care, to find the treacherous churl; nor knows
Where he can have secreted Rabicane,
Who every other animal outgoes:
And vainly searched all day the dome about,
Above, below, within it, and without.

XVI.

He, wearied and confused with wandering wide,
Perceived the place was by enchantment wrought,
And of the book he carried at his side,
By Logistilla given in India, thought;
Bestowed, should new enchantment him betide,
That needful succour might therein be sought.
He to the index turns, and quickly sees
What pages show the proper remedies.

XVII.

I' the book, of that enchanted house at large
Was written, and in this was taught the way
To foil the enchanter, and to set at large
The different prisoners, subject to his sway.
'Of these illusions and these frauds in charge,
'A spirit pent beneath the threshold lay;
'And the stone raised which kept him fast below,
'With him the palace into smoke would go.'

XVIII.

Astolpho with desire to bring to end
An enterprise so passing fair, delays
No more, but to the task his force does bend,
And prove how much the heavy marble weighs.
As old Atlantes sees the knight intend
To bring to scorn his art and evil ways,
Suspicious of the ill which may ensue,
He moves to assail him with enchantments new.

XIX.

He, with his spells and shapes of devilish kind,
Makes the duke different from his wont appear;
To one a giant, and to one a hind,
To other an ill-visaged cavalier;
Each, in the form which in the thicket blind
The false enchanter wore, beholds the peer.
So that they all, with purpose to have back
What the magician took, the duke attack.

XX.

The Child*, Gradasso, Iroldo, Bradamant,
Prasildo, Brandimart, and many more,
All, cheated by this new illusion, pant
To slay the English baron, angered sore;
But he abased their pride and haughty vaunt,
Who straight bethought him of the horn he bore.
But for the succour of its echo dread,
They, without fail, had laid Astolpho dead.

* Rogero.

XXI.

But he no sooner has the bugle wound
And poured a horrid larum, than in guise
Of pigeons at the musquet's scaring sound,
The troop of cavaliers affrighted flies.
No less the necromancer starts astound,
No less he from his den in panic hies;
Troubled and pale, and hurrying evermore
Till out of hearing of the horrid roar

XXII.

The warder fled; with him his prisoned train,
And many steeds as well are fled and gone;
(These more than rope is needed to restrain)
Who after their astounded masters run,
Scared by the sound; nor cat nor mouse remain,
Who seem to hear in it, '*Lay on, lay on.*'
Rabican with the rest had broke his bands,
But that he fell into Astolpho's hands.

XXIII.

He, having chased the enchanter Moor away,
Upraised the heavy threshold from the ground;
Beneath which, figures and more matters lay,
That I omit; desirous to confound
The spell which did the magic dome upstay,
The duke made havock of whate'er he found,
As him the book he carried taught to do:
And into mist and smoke all past from view.

XXIV.

There he found fastened by a golden chain
Rogero's famous courser, *him* I say
Given by the wizard, that to the domain
Of false Alcina him he might convey:
On which, equipt with Logistilla's rein,
To France Rogero had retraced his way,
And had from Ind to England rounded all
The right-hand side of the terrestrial ball.

XXV.

I know not if you recollect how tied
To a tree Rogero left his rein, the day
Galaphron's naked daughter from his side
Vanished, and him did with that scorn appay.
The courser, to his wonder who espied,
Returned to him whom he was used to obey;
Beneath the old enchanter's care to dwell,
And stayed with him till broken was the spell.

XXVI.

At nought Astolpho could more joyous be
Than this; of all things fortunate the best:
In that the hippogryph so happily
Offered himself; that he might scower the rest,
(As much he coveted) of land and sea,
And in few days the ample world invest.
Him well he knew, how fit for his behoof;
For of his feats he had elsewhere made proof.

XXVII.

Him he that day in India proved, when sped
He was by sage Melissa, from the reign
Of that ill woman who him, sore bested,
Had changed from man to myrtle on the plain;
Had marked and noted how his giddy head
Was formed by Logistilla to the rein;
And saw how well instructed by her care
Rogero was, to guide him every where.

XXVIII.

Minded to take the hippogryph, he flung
The saddle on him, which lay near, and bitted
The steed, by choosing, all the reins among,
This part or that, until his mouth was fitted:
For in that place were many bridles hung,
Belonging to the coursers which had flitted.
And now alone, intent upon his flight,
The thought of Rabicane detained the knight.

XXIX.

Good cause he had to love that Rabicane,
For better horse was not to run with lance,
And him had he from the remotest reign
Of India ridden even into France:
After much thought, he to some friend would fain
Present him, rather than so, left to chance,
Abandon there the courser, as a prey,
To the first stranger who should pass that way.

XXX.

He stood upon the watch if he could view
Some hunter in the forest, or some hind,
To whom he might commit the charge, and who
Might to some city lead the horse behind.
He waited all that day and till the new
Had dawned, when, while the twilight yet was blind,
He thought he saw, as he expecting stood,
A cavalier approaching through the wood.

XXXI.

But it behoves that, ere the rest I say,
I Bradamant and good Rogero find.
After the horn had ceased, and, far away,
The beauteous pair had left the dome behind,
Rogero looked, and knew what till that day
He had seen not, by Atlantes rendered blind.
Atlantes had effected by his power,
They should not know each other till that hour.

XXXII.

Rogero looks on Bradamant, and she
Looks on Rogero in profound surprise
That for so many days that witchery
Had so obscured her altered mind and eyes.
Rejoiced, Rogero clasps his lady free,
Crimsoning with deeper than the rose's dyes,
And his fair love's first blossoms, while he clips
The gentle damsel, gathers from her lips.

XXXIII.

A thousand times they their embrace renew,
And closely each is by the other prest;
While so delighted are those lovers two,
Their joys are ill contained within their breast.
Deluded by enchantments, much they rue
That while they were within the wizard's rest,
They should not e'er have one another known,
And have so many happy days foregone.

XXXIV.

The gentle Bradamant, who was i' the vein
To grant whatever prudent virgin might,
To solace her desiring lover's pain,
So that her honour should receive no slight;
—'If the last fruits he of her love would gain,
'Nor find her ever stubborn,' bade the knight,
'Her of Duke Aymon through fair mean demand;
'But be baptized before he claimed her hand.'

XXXV.

Rogero good, who not alone to be
A christian for the love of her were fain,
As his good sire had been, and anciently
His grandsire and his whole illustrious strain,
But for her pleasure would immediately
Resign whatever did of life remain,
Says, "I not only, if 'tis thy desire,
"Will be baptized by water, but by fire."

XXXVI.

Then on his way to be baptized he hied,
That he might next espouse the martial may,
With Bradamant; who served him as a guide
To Vallombrosa's fane [4], an abbey gray,
Rich, fair, nor less religious, and beside,
Courteous to whosoever passed that way;
And they encountered, issuing from the chase,
A woman, with a passing woful face.

XXXVII.

Rogero, as still courteous, still humane
To all, but woman most, when he discerned
Her dainty visage furrowed by a rain
Of lovely tears, sore pitied her, and burned
With the desire to know her grievous pain;
And having to the mournful lady turned,
Besought her, after fair salute, to show
What cause had made her eyes thus overflow.

XXXVIII.

And she, uplifting their moist rays and bright,
Most kindly to the inquiring child replied;
And of the cause of her unhappy plight,
Him, since he sought it, fully satisfied.
"Thou hast to understand, O gentle knight,
"My visage is so bathed with tears," she cried,
"In pity to a youth condemned to die
"This very day, within a town hard by.

XXXIX.

" Loving a gentle lady and a gay,
" The daughter of Marsilius, king of Spain,
" And feigning, veiled in feminine array,
" The modest roll of eye and girlish strain,
" With her each night the amorous stripling lay,
" Nor any had suspicion of the twain:
" But nought so hidden is, but searching eye
" In the long run the secret will espy.

XL.

" One first perceived it, and then spake with two,
" Those two with more, till to the king 'twas said;
" Of whom but yesterday a follower true
" Gave order to surprise the pair in bed,
" And in the citadel the prisoners mew,
" To separate dungeons in that fortress led;
" Nor think I that enough of day remains
" To save the lover from his cruel pains.

XLI.

" I fled, not to behold such cruelty,
" For they alive the wretched youth will burn;
" Nor think I aught could more afflicting be
" Than such fair stripling's torment to discern,
" Or that hereafter thing can pleasure me
" So much, but that it will to trouble turn,
" If memory retrace the cruel flame
" Which preyed upon his fair and dainty frame."

XLII.

Touched deeply, Bradamant his danger hears,
In heart sore troubled at the story shown;
As anxious for the lover, it appears,
As if he were a brother of her own:
Nor certes wholly causeless are her fears,
As in an after verse will be made known.
Then to Rogero; "Him to keep from harms,
"Meseems we worthily should turn our arms."

XLIII.

And to that melancholy damsel said;
"Place us but once within the walls, and I,
"So that the youth be not already dead,
"Will be your warrant that he shall not die."
Rogero, who the kindly bosom read
Of Bradamant, still full of piety,
Felt himself burn all over with desire
To snatch the unhappy stripling from the fire.

XLIV.

And to the maid, whose troubled face appears
Bathed with a briny flood, "Why wait we?—need
"Is here of speedy succour, not of tears.
"Do you but where the youth is prisoned lead;
"Him from a thousand swords, a thousand spears,
"We vow to save; so it be done with speed.
"But haste you, lest too tardy be our aid,
"And he be burnt, while succour is delayed."

XLV.

The haughty semblance and the lofty say
Of these, who with such wondrous daring glowed,
That hope, which long had ceased to be her stay,
Again upon the grieving dame bestowed:
But, for she less the distance of the way
Dreaded, than interruption of the road,
Lest they, through this, should take that path in vain,
The damsel stood suspended and in pain.

XLVI.

Then said: "If to the place our journey lay
"By the highroad, which is both straight and plain,
"That we in time might reach it, I should say,
"Before the fire was lit; but we must strain
"By path so foul and crooked, that a day
"To reach the city would suffice with pain;
"And when, alas! we thither shall have sped,
"I fear that we shall find the stripling dead."

XLVII.

"And wherefore take we not the way most near?"
Rogero answers; and the dame replies,
"Because fast by where we our course should steer,
"A castle of the Count of Poictiers lies:
"Where Pinnabel for dame and cavalier
"Did, three days past, a shameful law devise;
"Than whom more worthless living wight is none,
"The Count Anselmo d'Altaripa's son.

XLVIII.

" No cavalier or lady by that rest
" Without some noted scorn and injury goes;
" Both of their coursers here are dispossest,
" And knight his arms and dame her gown foregoes[5].
" No better cavaliers lay lance in rest,
" Nor have for years in France against their foes,
" Than four, who for Sir Pinnabel have plight
" Their promise to maintain the castle's right.

XLIX.

" Whence first arose the usage, which began
" But three days since, you now, sir knight, shall hear;
" And shall the cause, if right or evil, scan,
" Which moved the banded cavaliers to swear.
" So ill a lady has the Castellan*,
" So wayward, that she is without a peer:
" Who, on a day, as with the count she went,
" I know not whither, by a knight was shent.

L.

" This knight, as flouted by that bonnibel,
" For carrying on his croup an ancient dame,
" Encountered with her champion Pinnabel,
" Of overweening pride and little fame:
" Him he o'erturned, made her alight as well,
" And put her to the proof, if sound or lame;
" —Left her on foot, and had that woman old
" In the dismounted damsel's garment stoled.

* Pinnabel.

LI.

" She, who remained on foot, in fell despite,
" Greedy of vengeance, and athirst for ill,
" Leagued with the faithless Pinnabel, a wight
" All evil prompt to further and fulfil,
" Says, ' she shall never rest by day nor night,
' Nor ever know a happy hour, until
' A thousand knights and dames are dispossest
' Of courser, and of armour, and of vest.'

LII.

" Four puissant knights arrived that very day
" It happened, at a place of his, and who
" Had all of them from regions far away
" Come lately to those parts: so many true
" And valiant warriors, skilled in martial play,
" Our age has seen not. These the goodly crew:
" Guido the savage, but a stripling yet,
" Gryphon, and Aquilant, and Sansonet!

LIII.

" Them at the fortilage, of which I told,
" Sir Pinnabel received with semblance fair,
" Next seized the ensuing night the warriors bold
" In bed, nor loosed, till he had made them swear
" That (he such period fixt) they in his hold
" Should be his faithful champions for a year
" And month; and of his horse and arms deprive
" Whatever cavalier should there arrive.

LIV.

" And any damsel whom the stranger bore
" With him, dismount, and strip her of her vest.
" So, thus surprised, the warlike prisoners swore;
" So were constrained to observe the cruel hest,
" Though grieved and troubled: nor against the four,
" It seems, can any joust, but vails his crest.
" Knights infinite have come; but one and all,
" Afoot and without arms have left that Hall.

LV.

" Their order is, who from the castle hies,
" The first by lot, shall meet the foe alone,
" But if he find a champion of such guise
" As keeps the sell, while he himself is thrown,
" The rest must undertake the enterprise,
" Even to the death, against that single one,
" Ranged in a band. If such each single knight,
" Imagine the assembled warriors' might!

LVI.

" Nor stands it with our haste, which all delay,
" All let forbids, that you beside that tower
" Be forced to stop and mingle in the fray:
" For grant that you be conquerors in the stower,
" (And as your presence warrants well, you may,)
" 'Tis not a thing concluded in an hour.
" And if all day he wait our succour, I
" Much fear the stripling in the fire will die."

LVII.

" Regard we not this hindrance of our quest,"
Rogero cried; " But do we what we may!
" Let HIM who rules the heavens ordain the rest,
" Or Fortune, if he leave it in her sway;
" To you shall by this joust be manifest
" If we can aid the youth; for whom to-day
" They on a ground so causeless and so slight,
" As you to us rehearsed, the fire will light."

LVIII.

Rogero ceased; and in the nearest way
The damsel put the pair without reply:
Nor these beyond three miles had fared, when they
Reached bridge and gate, the place of forfeitry,
Of horse and arms and feminine array,
With peril sore of life. On turret high,
Upon first sight of them, a sentinel
Beat twice upon the castle's larum-bell.

LIX.

And lo, in eager hurry from the gate
An elder trotting on a hackney made!
And he approaching cried, " Await, await!
" —Hola! halt, sirs, for here a fine is paid:
" And I to you the usage shall relate,
" If this has not to you before been said."
And to the three forthwith began to tell
The use established there by Pinnabel.

LX.

He next proceeds, as he had wont before
To counsel other errant cavalier.
" Unrobe the lady," (said that elder hoar,)
" My sons, and leave your steeds and martial geer;
" Nor put yourselves in peril, and with four
" Such matchless champions hazard the career.
" Clothes, arms, and coursers every where are rife;
" But not to be repaired is loss of life."

LXI.

" —No more!" (Rogero said,) " No more! for I
" Am well informed of all, and hither speed
" With the intention, here by proof to try
" If, what my heart has vouched, I am in deed.
" For sign or threat I yield not panoply,
" If nought beside I hear, nor vest nor steed.
" And this my comrade, I as surely know,
" These for mere words as little will forego.

LXII.

" But let me face to face, by Heaven, espy
" Those who would take my horse and arms away;
" For we have yet beyond that hill to hie,
" And little time can here afford to stay."
" Behold the man," that ancient made reply,
" Clear of the bridge!"—Nor did in this missay;
For thence a warrior pricked, who, powdered o'er
With snowy flowers, a crimson surcoat wore.

LXIII.

Bradamant for long time with earnest prayer,
For courtesy the good Rogero prest,
'To let her from his sell the warrior bear,
'Who with white flowers had purfled o'er his vest.'
But moved him not; and to Rogero's share
Must leave, and do herself, what liked him best.
He willed the whole emprize his own should be,
And Bradamant should stand apart to see.

LXIV.

The child demanded of that elder, who
Was he that from the gate first took his way,
And he, "'Tis Sansonet; of crimson hue,
"I know his surcoat, with white flowrets gay."
Without a word exchanged, the warlike two
Divide the ground, and short is the delay.
For they, against each other, levelling low
Their spears, and hurrying sore their coursers, go.

LXV.

This while had issued from the fortress near,
With many footmen girt, Sir Pinnabel,
All ready to despoil the cavalier,
Who in the warlike joust should void his sell.
At one another spurred in bold career
The knights, with their huge lances rested well.
Up to the points nigh equal was each stick,
Of stubborn native oak, and two palms thick.

LXVI.

Sansonet, of such staves, above five pair
Had made them sever from the living stock,
In neighbouring wood, and bade his followers bear
Two of them hither, destined for that shock:
Such truncheons to withstand, well needed were
A shield and cuirass of the diamond rock.
One he had made them give his foe, and one
He kept himself, the present course to run.

LXVII.

With these which might the solid anvil bore,
(So well their ends were pointed) there and here,
Each aiming at the shield his foeman wore,
The puissant warriors shocked in mid career.
That of Rogero, wrought with magic lore,
By fiends, had little from the stroke to fear:
I of the buckler speak Atlantes made,
Of whose rare virtues I whilere have said.

LXVIII.

I have already said, the enchanted light
Strikes with such force on the beholder's eyes,
That, at the shield's discovery, every wight
Is blinded, or on earth half lifeless lies.
Wherefore, well mantled with a veil, the knight
Keeps it, unless some pressing need surprise:
Impassive is the shield as well believed,
Since it no damage in the shock received.

LXIX.

The other by less skilful artist wrought,
Did not so well that weightiest blow abide,
But, as if smit by thunder, in a thought,
Gave way before the steel, and opened wide;
Gave way before the griding steel, which sought
The arm beneath, by this ill fortified:
So that Sir Sansonet was smote, and reeled,
In his despite, unhorsed upon the field.

LXX.

And this was the first comrade of the train
That of the tower maintained the usage fell,
Who there had failed another's spoil to gain,
And voided in the joust his knightly sell.
Who laughs, as well will sometimes have to plain,
And find that Fortune will by fits rebel.
Anew the warder on his larum beats,
And to the other knights the sign repeats.

LXXI.

This while Sir Pinnabello had drawn near
To Bradamant, and prayed that she would shew
'What warrior had his knight in the career
'Smit with such prowess.' That the guerdon due
To his ill deeds might wait the cavalier,
God's justice that ill-doer thither drew
On the same courser, which before the Cheat
From Bradamant had taken by deceit.

LXXII.

'Twas now exactly the eighth month was ended,
Since, if you recollect, upon his way,
The faithless Maganzese, with whom she wended,
Cast into Merlin's tomb the martial may;
When her a bough, which fell with her, defended
From death, or her good Fortune, rather say;
And Pinnabel bore off her courser brave,
Deeming the damsel buried in the cave.

LXXIII.

The courser, and, through him, the cavalier,
Bradamant knew to be the wicked Count,
And, having heard him, and perused him near,
With more attentive eye and front to front—
"This is the man," (the damsel said) "'tis clear,
"Who erst designed me outrage and affront.
"Lo! him the traitor's sin doth hither speed,
"Of all his treasons to receive the meed."

LXXIV.

To threaten him with vengeance, and to lay
Hands on her sword and charge him home, was done
All in a thought; but first she barred the way
By which he might his fortilage have won.
To earth himself like fox, in his dismay,
Sir Pinnabel has every hope forgone.
He screaming loud, nor ever making head
Against the damsel, through the forest fled.

LXXV.

Pale and dismayed his spurs the caitiff plied
Whose last hope of escape in flight was found;
While with her ready sword, Dordona's pride
Was at his flank, and prest him in his round,
Hunting him close and ever fast beside:
Loud is the uproar, and the woods resound.
Nothing of this is at the castle kenned,
For only to Rogero all attend.

LXXVI.

The other three, who from the fortress came,
This while had issued forth upon their way,
And brought with them the ill-accustomed dame,
Who made wayfarers that ill use obey.
In all (who rather than prolong with blame
Their life, would choose to perish in the fray),
The kindling visage burns, and heart is woe,
That to assail one man so many go.

LXXVII.

The cruel courtezan by whom was made,
And by whose hest maintained, that evil rite,
Reminds the warriors that they are arrayed
By oath and pact, to avenge her in the fight.
" If with his lance alone thy foes are laid
" On earth, why should I band with other knight?"
(Guido the savage said) " and, if I lie,
" Off with my head, for I consent to die."

LXXVIII.

So Aquilant; so Gryphon. For the twain
Singly against a single foe would run;
And rather would be taken, rather slain,
Than he should be assailed by more than one.
To them exclaimed the woman: "Why in vain
"Waste you so many words, where fruit is none?
"I brought you here that champion's arms to take,
"Not other laws and other pacts to make.

LXXIX.

"You should have offered, when in prison-cell,
"This your excuse; which now too late is made.
"'Tis yours the law's observance to compel,
"And not with lying tongue your oath evade."
"—Behold! the arms; behold, with a new sell
"And cloth, the goodly steed!" Rogero said,
"Behold with these, as well, the damsel's vest!
"If these you covet, why your course arrest?"

LXXX.

She of the castle presses on *this* side,
On *that* Rogero rates, and calls them on;
Till they parforce, t'wards him, together hied:
But red with shame, are to the encounter gone.
Foremost appeared 'mid those three knights of pride,
Of Burgundy's good marquis either son*.
But Guido, who was borne on heavier steed,
Came at some interval, with tardier speed.

* Gryphon and Aquilant.

LXXXI.

With the same lance with which he overbore
Sir Sansonet, Rogero came to fight;
Well-covered with the shield which heretofore
Atlantes used on Pyrenean height;
I say the enchanted buckler, which, too sore
For human sufferance, dazed the astonished sight:
To which Rogero, as a last resource,
In the most pressing peril had recourse.

LXXXII.

Although three times alone the child was fain
(And, certes sore bested) this to display;
Twice when he from the wanton Fairy's reign
Was to that soberer region on his way!
Last, when the unsated Orc upon the main,
By this astounded, 'mid the sea-foam lay;
Which would have fed upon the naked maid,
So cruel to the Child who brought her aid.

LXXXIII.

Save these three times, he has preserved the shield
Beneath its veil, but covered in such wise
That it may quickly be to sight revealed,
If he in need of its good succour lies.
With this, as said before, he came a-field
As boldly, as if those three enemies,
Who were arrayed before him, had appeared
Yet less than little children to be feared.

LXXXIV.

Rogero shocked the valiant Gryphon, where
The border of the buckler joined the sight,
Who seemed as he would fall, now here, now there,
And, from his courser far, last fell outright.
He at the shield had aimed, but smote not fair
The mark; and (for Rogero's orb was bright
And smooth) the hissing weapon slipt, and wrought
Other effect than was in Gryphon's thought.

LXXXV.

It rent and tore the veil which served to hide
The lightning's fearful and enchanted rays;
Which, without blinded eyes, can none abide
Upright, nor refuge is for them who gaze.
Aquilant, who was at his brother's side,
Tore off the rest, and made the buckler blaze:
The splendour struck the valiant brothers blind,
And Guido in their rear, who spurred behind.

LXXXVI.

These here, or there, to earth astonished reel;
Nor eyes alone are dazzled by the light,
But every sense astounds the flaming steel.
Unconscious of the issue of the fight,
Rogero turned his horse, and, in the wheel,
Handled his sword, so good to thrust and smite;
And none descried his fury to oppose;
For in the charge dismounted were his foes.

LXXXVII.

The knights, together with the footmen all,
And women, who had from the castle hied,
Nor less the coursers panting with their fall,
As if about to die, the warrior spied.
He wondered first, and next perceived the pall
Of silk was hanging down on the left side;
I say the pall, in which he used to lap
His shield, the evil cause of that mishap.

LXXXVIII.

He quickly turns, and, turning, rolls his eyes,
In hopes to view his well-loved martial maid;
And thitherward, without delay, he hies
Where, when the joust began, the damsel stayed.
Not finding her, it is the child's surmise
That she is gone to bear the stripling aid;
Fearing he may be burnt, while they their journey
So long delay, retarded by that tourney.

LXXXIX.

He saw the damsel, stretched among the rest
Who him had thither guided: as she lay,
He took and placed her, yet with sleep opprest,
Before him, and, sore-troubled, rode away.
He with a mantle, which above her vest
She wore, concealed the enchanted buckler's ray:
And to the maid restored, when 'twas concealed,
Her senses, which were ravished by the shield.

XC.

Away Rogero posted with the dame,
And did not dare his crimsoned visage raise;
Since every one, it seemed to him, might blame
With right that victory, worthy little praise.
" By what amends can I of such a shame
" (The blushing warrior said) the stain eraze?
" For 'twill be bruited, all my deeds by sleight
" Of magic have been done, and not by might."

XCI.

As, thinking thus, he journeyed on his way,
Rogero stumbled upon what he sought;
For, in the middle of the track, there lay
A well, within the ground profoundly wrought:
Whither the thirsty herd, at noon of day,
Repaired, their paunches with green forage fraught.
Rogero said, " 'Tis now, must I provide,
" I shame from thee, O shield, no more abide.

XCII.

" Thee will I keep no more, and this shall be
" Even the last shame which so on me is thrown:"
The child so ending his self-colloquy,
Dismounting, takes a large and heavy stone;
Which to the shield he ties, and bodily
Both to the bottom of the well are gone.
" Lie buried there for ever, from all eyes,
" And with thee hidden be my shame!" he cries.

XCIII.

Filled to the brim with water was the well;
Heavy the stone, and heavy was the shield:
Nor stopt they till they to the bottom fell,
By the light, liquid element concealed.
Fame was not slow the noble act to swell,
But, wandering wide, the deed in brief revealed,
And voicing it abroad, with trumpet-sound,
Told France and Spain and all the countries round.

XCIV.

When that so strange adventure to the rest
Of the wide world, from mouth to mouth was blown,
Knights out of number undertook the quest,
From neighbouring parts and distant; but unknown
To all remained the forest which possessed
The spring wherein the virtuous shield was thrown:
For she who told the action, would not say
Where was the well, nor in what land it lay.

XCV.

Upon Rogero's parting thence, where fell
The four good champions of that evil law,
Made by the castle's lord Sir Pinnabel,
By him discomfited like men of straw,
—The shield withdrawn—he had removed as well
The light, which quelled *their* sight and minds who saw;
And those, who, like dead men, on earth had lain,
Had risen, full of wonderment, again.

XCVI.

Nor any thing throughout that livelong day
They 'mid themselves but that strange case relate;
And how it was in that disastrous fray
Each by the horrid light was quelled, debate.
While these, discoursing, of the adventure say,
Tidings are brought of Pinabello's fate.
That Pinnabel is dead the warriors hear,
But learn not who had slain the cavalier.

XCVII.

Bradamant in close pass, this while, had staid
The faithless Pinnabel, and sorely prest;
And many times had buried half her blade
Within his bleeding flanks and heaving breast.
When of his crimes the forfeit had been paid
By him, the infected country's curse and pest,
She from the conscious forest turned away
With that good steed the thief had made his prey.

XCVIII.

She would return where she had left the knight,
But never could make out the road anew;
And now by valley, now by mountain-height,
Wandered well-nigh the ample country through.
Yet could she never (such her fortune's spite)
Find out the way to join Rogero true.
Him in another canto I attend
Who loves the tale, to hear my story's end.

NOTES TO CANTO XXII.

1.

Nor less renowned is Hypermnestra's fame
For her so many wicked sisters' shame.

Stanza ii. lines 7 and 8.

She was one of the fifty sisters, daughters of Danaus, who spared her husband, when the others, at the instigation of the father, murdered theirs.

——————— fuit in parentem
Splendide mendax.

2.

To Aix-la-Chapelle thence, through Arden's wood,
Came and embarked upon the Flemish strand.

Stanza vii. lines 1 and 2.

In the original,

Per la selva d'Ardenna in Aquisgrana
Giunse, &c.

Aquisgrana is to this day the Italian name for Aix-la-Chapelle; a fact which escaped the discovery of Mr. Hoole, who set it down in English, as he found it in his original, leaving to his readers to hunt for *Aquisgrana* in the maps of Flanders.

The fact of Ardennes being the name of a forest in France

and Arden in English, is to be explained by their Celtic derivation, *ar* great, and *denne* a wood. Hence Denney-walk in the New Forest, &c.

3.

To sea, with southern breeze, his vessel stood.

Stanza vii. line 3.

In the original, which has been misunderstood,

L' aura che soffia *verso* Tramontana.

4.

who served him as a guide
To Vallombrosa's fane.

Stanza xxxvi. lines 3 and 4.

It is hardly necessary to observe that this is a convent in the Apennines: since it has been made almost as familiar to English, as it is to Italian ears, by the poetry of Milton.

5.

No cavalier or lady by that rest
Without some noted scorn or injury goes;
Both of their coursers here are dispossest,
And knight his arms, and dame her gown forcgoes.

Stanza xlviii. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

This is in the true spirit of romance, and, as I have before observed, romance was but an exaggerated picture of real life, as it existed during the middle ages. Mr. Ellis, in his preface to Way's Fabliaux, observes; "The reader, who is accustomed to the regularity of civilized life, cannot survey without astonishment the detail of confusion that prevailed in those times of feudal barbarism. The universal fondness for the pleasures of the chase, and the general contempt for agriculture, had converted a considerable part of Europe into forests; and the same solitude which gave an asylum to the beasts of the field afforded

security to large bands of robbers, who were generally sure of purchasing by a participation of their plunder the protection and assistance of the little tyrants in their neighbourhood. *At every bridge and on every road, enormous tolls were exacted; and passengers were often plundered by the castellains, through whose territories they past.*" I will only add to this statement, that, reasoning from the spirit of the age as exemplified in *Jocular Tenures*, it does not seem improbable that ridiculous and degrading usages should have been enforced upon travellers at bridges, &c.; and it is probable that the romancers had some sort of foundation for this, as well as for their other incidents, in real life.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Astolpho soars in air. Upon account
Of Pinnabel is prisoned Scotland's heir:
By Roland freed. Frontino Rodomont
Takes from Hippalca, trusted to her care.
With Mandȝicardo strives Aglantes' count:
Who, next, offended by his lady fair,
Into the fury falls, so strange and fell,
Which in the world has not a parallel.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIII.

I.

Let each assist the other in his need;
Seldom good actions go without their due;
And if their just reward should not succeed,
At least, nor death, nor shame, nor loss ensue.
Who wrongs another, the remembered meed
As well shall have, and soon or later rue.
That 'mountains never meet, but that men may,
'And oft encounter,' is an ancient say.

II.

Now mark what chanced to Pinnabel, the event
Of having borne himself so wickedly:
He at the last received due punishment,
Due and deserved by his iniquity.
And God, who for the most is ill content
To see the righteous suffer wrongfully,
Secured the maid from harm, and will secure
All who from every wickedness are pure.

III.

Pinnabel deemed he to an end had brought,
And buried deep in earth, the martial maid;
Nor weening to behold her more, less thought
To her his treason's forfeit to have paid.
Nor profits it the wily traitor ought
To be among the forts his father swayed.
For Altaripa here its summit rears,
Amid rude hills, confining on Poictiers.

IV.

Anselm in Altaripa held command,
The count from whom was sprung this evil seed:
Who, to escape from angry Clermont's hand,
Of friends and of assistance stood in need.
At a hill's foot, with her avenging brand,
Bradamant made the worthless traitor bleed;
Who found no better succour in the strife
Than piteous cry and fruitless prayer for life.

V.

When she has put to death the treacherous peer,
Who to put her to death had erst intent,
To seek Rogero she again would steer,
But that her cruel fate would not consent;
Which, where the wood was loneliest and most drear,
To wander by close path the lady sent,
Until the western sun withdrew his light,
Abandoning the world above to night.

VI.

Nor knowing where for shelter she should rove,
Bradamant in that place resolves to stay,
Couched on the verdant herbage of the grove;
And, sleeping, now awaits the dawn of day,
Now watching Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Jove,
And the other wandering gods upon their way:
But, whether waking or to sleep resigned,
Has ayè Rogero present to her mind.

VII.

With sorrow and repentance oft assailed,
She from her inmost heart profoundly sighed,
That Anger over Love should have prevailed.
" Anger has torn me from my love," (she cried,)
" Oh! had I made some note, which had availed,
" Thither, whence I set out, my steps to guide,
" When I departed on my ill emprize!
" Sure I was lorn of memory and of eyes!"

VIII.

These words and others she in mournful strain
Utters, and broods within her heart on more.
Meanwhile a wind of sighs, and plenteous rain
Of tears, are tokens of her anguish sore.
In the east, at last, expected long in vain,
The wished-for twilight streaked the horizon o'er;
And she her courser took, which on the ley
Was feeding, and rode forth to meet the day.

IX.

Nor far had rode, ere from the greenwood-trees
She issued, where the dome was erst displayed;
And many days her with such witcheries
The evil-minded wizard had delayed.
Here she Astolpho found, who at full ease
A bridle for the Hippogryph had made,
And here was standing, thoughtful and in pain
To whom he should deliver Rabicane.

X.

By chance she found him, as the cavalier
Had from the helm uncased his head to view;
So that when of the dingy forest clear,
Fair Bradamant her gentle cousin knew.
Him from afar she hailed with joyful cheer,
And now more nigh, to embrace the warrior flew;
And named herself, and raised her vizor high,
And let him plainly who she was espy.

XI.

None could Astolpho have found any where
With whom to leave his horse with more content,
As knowing she would guard the steed with care,
And to his lord on his return present;
And he believed that Heaven had, in its care,
Duke Aymon's daughter for this purpose sent.
Her was he wont with pleasure aye to see;
But now with more in his necessity.

XII.

Embracing twice or thrice the cousins stand,
Fraternally, each other's neck, and they
Had of each other's welfare made demand
With much affection, ere the duke 'gan say;
" Would I now see the winged people's land,
" Here upon earth I make too long delay."
And opening to the dame the thought he brewed,
To her the flying horse Astolpho shewed.

XIII.

But she scarce marvelled when above the plain
She saw the rising steed his wings unfold;
Since upon former time, with mastering rein,
On him had charged the dame that wizard old;
And made her eye and eyelid sorely strain,
So hard she gazed, his movements to behold;
The day that he bore off, with wonderous range,
Rogero on his journey, long and strange.

XIV.

Astolpho says, ' On her he will bestow
' His Rabican; so passing swift of kind,
' That, if the courser started when a bow
' Was drawn, he left the feathered shaft behind;
' And will as well his panoply forego,
' That it may to Mount Alban be consigned:
' And she for him preserve the martial weed;
' Since of his arms he has no present need.'

XV.

Bent, since a course in air was to be flown,
That he, as best he can, will make him light.
Yet keeps the sword and horn; although alone
The horn from every risque might shield the knight:
But he the lance abandons, which the son
Of Galaphron* was wont to bear in fight;
The lance, by which whoever in the course
Was touched, fell headlong hurtling from his horse.

XVI.

Backed by Astolpho, and ascending slow,
The hippogryph through yielding æther flew;
And next the rider stirred the courser so,
That in a thought he vanished out of view.
Thus with his pilot does the patron go,
Fearing the gale and rock, till he is through
The reefs; then, having left the shore behind,
Hoists every sail, and shoots before the wind.

XVII.

Bradamant, when departed was the peer,
Remained distressed in mind; since in what way
She knew not her good kinsman's warlike gear
And courser to Mount Alban to convey.
For on her heart, which they inflame and tear,
The warm desire and greedy will yet prey
To see the Child; whom she to find once more
At Vallombrosa thought, if not before.

* Argalia.

XVIII.

Here standing in suspense, by chance she spied
A churl, that came towards her on the plain,
Who, at her hest, Astolpho's armour tied,
As best he might, and laid on Rabicane;
She next behind her bade the peasant guide
(One courser loaded and one loose) the twain.
Two were the steeds; for she had *that* before,
On which his horse from Pinnabel she bore.

XIX.

To Vallombrosa to direct her way
She thought, in hopes to find Rogero there:
But, fearing evermore to go astray,
Knew not how thither she might best repair.
The churl had of the country small assay,
And, sure to be bewildered, wend the pair:
Yet at a venture thitherward she hies,
Where she believes the place of meeting lies.

XX.

She here and there, as she her way pursued,
Turned, but found none to question of the road;
She saw at mid-day, issuing from the wood,
A fort, nor far removed was the abode,
Which on the summit of a mountain stood,
And to the lady like Mount Alban showed;
And was Mount Alban sure; in which repair
One of her brothers and her mother were.

XXI.

She, when she recognized the place, became
Sadder at heart than I have power to say.
If she delays, discovered is the dame,
Nor thence will be allowed to wend her way:
If thence she wends not, of the amorous flame
Which so consumes her, she will be the prey,
Nor see Rogero more, nor compass aught
Which was at Vallombrosa to be wrought.

XXII.

Some deal she doubted: then to turn her steed,
Resolved upon Mount Alban's castle near;
And, for she thence her way could deftly read,
Her course anew towards the abbey steer.
But Fortune, good or evil, had decreed
The maid, before she of the vale was clear,
Of one of her good brethren should be spied,
Alardo named, ere she had time to hide.

XXIII.

He came from billeting the bands which lay
Dispersed about that province, foot and horse;
For the surrounding district, to obey
King Charlemagne, had raised another force.
Embraces brotherly and friendly say,
Salutes and kindly cheer, ensue of course;
And next into Mount Alban, side by side,
They, communing of many matters, ride.

XXIV.

Bradamant enters Montalbano's seat,
Whom Beatrice* had mourned, and vainly sought
Through spacious France: 'Tis here all welcome sweet,
The kiss and clasp of hand, she holds at nought,
While her a mother and a brother greet,
As the enamoured maid compares in thought
These with the loved Rogero's fond embrace;
Which time will never from her mind efface.

XXV.

Because *she* could not go, one in her stead
To send to Vallombrosa she devised,
Who thither in the damsel's name should speed;
By whom should young Rogero be apprised
What kept her thence; and prayed, if prayer should need,
That there he for her love would be baptised;
And next, as was concerted, would intend
What might their bridal bring to happy end.

XXVI.

She purposed the same messenger should bear
As well to her Rogero his good steed;
Which he was ever wonted to hold dear,
Worthily dear; for sure so stout at need
And beauteous was no courser, far or near,
In land of Christian or of Paynim creed,
In occupation of the Gaul or Moor;
Except Bayardo good and Brigliador.

* Bradamant's mother.

XXVII.

Valiant Rogero, when too bold of sprite
He backed the hippogryph and soared in air,
Frontino left (Frontino he was hight),
Whom Bradamant then took into her care,
And to Mount Alban sent; and had him dight,
And nourished, at large cost, with plenteous fare;
Nor let be rode except at easy pace.
Hence was he ne'er so sleek or well in case.

XXVIII.

Each damsel and each dame who her obeyed,
She tasked, together with herself, to sew,
With subtle toil; and with fine gold o'erlaid
A piece of silk of white and sable hue:
With this she trapt the horse; then chose a maid,
Old Callitrephia's daughter, from the crew;
Whose mother whilom Bradamant had nursed;
A damsel she in all her secrets versed.

XXIX.

How graven in her heart Rogero lies,
A thousand times to her she had confessed;
And had extolled above the deities
The manners, worth, and beauty he possessed.
"No better messenger could I devise,"
(She said, and called the damsel from the rest,)
"Nor have I one, Hippalca mine, more sage
"And sure than thee, to do my embassage[1].

XXX.

Hippalca was the attendant damsel hight.
" Go," (says her lady, and describes the way)
And afterwards informs the maid aright
Of all which to Rogero she should say;
And ' why she at the abbey failed the knight,
' Who must not to bad faith ascribe her stay,
' But this to Fortune charge, that so decides,
' Who, more than we ourselves, our conduct guides.'

XXXI.

She made the damsel mount upon a pad,
And put into her hand Frontino's rein;
And, if she met with one so rude or mad,
Who to deprive her of the steed were fain,
' Her to proclaim who was his owner,' bade,
' As that which might suffice to make him sane.'
For she believed there was no cavalier,
But that Rogero's name would make him fear.

XXXII.

Of many and many things, whereof to treat
With good Rogero, in her stead, she showed;
Of which instructed well, her palfrey fleet
Hippalca stirred, nor longer there abode.
Through highway, field, and wood, a gloomy beat,
More than ten weary miles the damsel rode,
Ere any crossed her path on mischief bent,
Or even questioned witherward she went.

XXXIII.

At noon of day, descending from a mount,
She in a streight and ill declivity,
Led by a dwarf, encountered Rodomont,
Who was afoot and harnessed cap-a-pee.
The Moor towards her raised his haughty front,
And straight blasphemed the eternal Hierarchy,
That horse, so richly trapped and passing fair,
He had not found in a knight-errant's care.

XXXIV.

On the first courser he should find, the knight
Had sworn a solemn oath his hands to lay[2]:
This *was* the first, nor he on steed could light
Fairer or fitter; yet to take away
The charger from a maid were foul despite.
Doubtful he stands, but covets sore the prey;
Eyes and surveys him, and says often, "Why
"Is not as well the courser's master by?"

XXXV.

"Ah! would he were!" to him the maid replied,
"For haply he would make thee change thy thought.
"A better knight than thee the horse doth ride,
"And vainly would his match on earth be sought."
—"Who tramples thus on other's fame?"—he cried;
And she—"Rogero"—said, as she was taught.
Then Rodomont—"The steed I make my own;
"Since him a champion rides of such renown.

XXXVI.

" If he, as you relate, be of such force,
" That he surpasses all beside in might,
" I needs must pay the hire as well as horse;
" And be this at the pleasure of the knight[3]!
" That I am Rodomont, to him discourse;
" And, if indeed with me he lists to fight,
" Me shall he find; in that I shine confest,
" By my own light, in motion or at rest.

XXXVII.

" I leave such vestige wheresoe'er I tread,
" The volleyed thunder leaves not worse below."
He had thrown back, over Frontino's head,
The courser's gilded reins, in saying so,
Backed him, and left Hippalca sore bested;
Who, bathed in tears, and goaded by her woe,
Cries shame on him, and threats the king with ill:
Rodomont hearkens not, and climbs the hill:

XXXVIII.

Whither the dwarf conducts him on the trace
Of Doralice and Mandricardo bold.
Behind, Hippalca him in ceaseless chase,
Pursues with taunt and curses manifold.
What came of this is said in other place.
Turpin, by whom this history is told,
Here makes digression, and returns again
Thither, where faithless Pinnabel was slain.

XXXIX.

Duke Aymon's daughter scarce had turned away
From thence, who on her track in haste had gone,
Ere thither by another path, astray,
Zerbino came, with that deceitful crone,
And saw the bleeding body where it lay:
And, though the warrior was to him unknown,
As good and courteous, felt his bosom swell,
With pity at that cruel sight and fell.

XL.

Dead lay Sir Pinnabel, and bathed in gore;
From whom such streams of blood profusely flow,
As were a cause for wonderment, had more
Swords than a hundred joined to lay him low.
A print of recent footsteps to explore
The cavalier of Scotland was not slow;
Who took the adventure, in the hope to read
Who was the doer of the murderous deed.

XLI.

The hag to wait was ordered by the peer,
Who would return to her in little space.
She to the body of the count drew near,
And with fixt eye examined every place;
Who willed not aught, that in her sight was dear,
The body of the dead should vainly grace;
As one who, soiled with every other vice,
Surpassed all womankind in avarice.

XLII.

If she in any manner could have thought,
Or hoped to have concealed the intended theft,
The bleeding warrior's surcoat, richly wrought,
She would, together with his arms, have reft;
But at what might be safely hidden, caught,
And, grieved at heart, forewent the glorious weft.
Him of a beauteous girdle she undrest,
And this secured between a double vest.

XLIII.

Zerbino after some short space came back,
Who vainly Bradamant had thence pursued
Through the green holt; because the beaten track
Was lost in many others in the wood;
And he (for daylight now began to lack)
Feared night should catch him 'mid those mountains rude,
And with the impious woman thence, in quest
Of inn, from the disastrous valley prest.

XLIV.

A spacious town, which Altaripa hight,
Journeying the twain, at two miles' distance spy[4]:
There stopt the pair, and halted for the night,
Which, at full soar, even now went up the sky:
Nor long had rested there ere, left and right,
They from the people heard a mournful cry;
And saw fast tears from every eyelid fall,
As if some cause of sorrow touched them all.

XLV.

Zerbino asked the occasion, and 'twas said,
'Tidings had been to Count Anselmo brought,
'That Pinnabel, his son, was lying dead
'In a streight way between two mountains wrought.'
Zerbino feigned surprise, and hung his head,
In fear lest he the assassin should be thought;
But well divined this was the wight he found
Upon his journey, lifeless on the ground.

XLVI.

After some little time, the funeral bier
Arrives, 'mid torch and flambeau, where the cries
Are yet more thick, and to the starry sphere
Lament and noise of smitten hands arise;
And faster and from fuller vein the tear
Waters all cheeks, descending from the eyes;
But in a cloud more dismal than the rest,
Is the unhappy father's visage drest.

XLVII.

While solemn preparation so was made
For the grand obsequies, with reverence due,
According to old use and honours paid,
In former age, corrupted by each new;
A proclamation of their lord allayed
Quickly the noise of the lamenting crew;
Promising any one a mighty gain
That should denounce by whom his son was slain.

XLVIII.

From voice to voice, from one to other ear,
The loud proclaim they through the town declare;
Till this the wicked woman chanced to hear,
Who past in rage the tyger or the bear;
And hence the ruin of the Scottish peer,
Either in hatred, would the crone prepare,
Or were it she alone might boast to be,
In human form, without humanity;

XLIX.

Or were it but to gain the promised prize;—
She to seek-out the grieving county flew,
And, prefacing her tale in likely wise,
Said that Zerbino did the deed; and drew
The girdle forth, to witness to her lies;
Which straight the miserable father knew;
And on the woman's tale and token built
A clear assurance of Zerbino's guilt.

L.

And, weeping, with raised hands, was heard to say,
'He for his murdered son would have amends.'
To block the hostel where Zerbino lay,
For all the town is risen, the father sends [5].
The prince, who deems his enemies away,
And no such injury as this attends,
In his first sleep is seized by Anselm's throng,
Who thinks he has endured so foul a wrong.

LI.

That night in prison, fettered with a pair
Of heavy fetters, is Zerbino chained.
For before yet the skies illumined are,
The wrongful execution is ordained;
And in the place will he be quartered, where
The deed was done for which he is arraigned.
No other inquest is on this received;
It is enough that so their lord believed.

LII.

When, the next morn, Aurora stains with dye
Red, white, and yellow, the clear horizon,
The people rise, to punish ("Death!" their cry)
Zerbino for the crime he has not done:
They without order him accompany,
A lawless multitude, some ride, some run.
I' the midst the Scottish prince, with drooping head,
Is, bound upon a little hackney, led.

LIII.

But HE who with the innocent oft sides,
Nor those abandons who make him their stay,
For prince Zerbino such defence provides,
There is no fear that he will die to-day;
God thitherward renowned Orlando guides;
Whose coming for his safety paves the way:
Orlando sees beneath him on a plain
The youth to death conducted by the train.

LIV.

With him was wending she, that in the cell,
Prisoned, Orlando found; that royal maid,
Child of Gallicia's king, fair Isabel,
Whom chance into the ruffians' power conveyed,
What time her ship she quitted, by the swell
Of the wild sea and tempest overlaid:
The damsel, who, yet nearer her heart-core
Than her own vital being, Zerbino wore.

LV.

She had beneath Orlando's convoy strayed,
Since rescued from the cave. When on the plain
The damsel saw the motley troop arrayed,
She asked Orlando what might be the train?
"I know not," said the Count; and left the maid
Upon the height, and hurried towards the plain.
He marked Zerbino, and at the first sight
A baron of high worth esteemed the knight,

LVI.

And asked him 'why and wherefore him they led
'Thus captive,' to Zerbino drawing near:
At this the doleful prince upraised his head,
And, having better heard the cavalier,
Rehearsed the truth; and this so well he said,
That he deserved the succour of the peer.
Well Sir Orlando him, by his reply,
Deemed innocent, and wrongly doomed to die.

LVII.

And, after he had heard 'twas at the hest
Of Anselm, Count of Altaripa, done,
Was certain 'twas an outrage manifest,
Since nought but ill could spring from him; and one,
Moreover, was the other's foe profest,
From ancient hate and enmity, which run
In Clermont and Maganza's blood; a feud
With injuries, and death and shame pursued.

LVIII.

Orlando to the rabble cried, "Untie
"The cavalier, unless you would be slain."
—"Who deals such mighty blows?"—one made reply,
That would be thought the truest of the train;
"Where he of fire who makes such bold defy,
"We wax or straw, too haughty were the strain:"
And charged with that the paladin of France.
Orlando at the losel couched his lance.

LIX.

The shining armour which the chief had rent
From young Zerbino but the night before,
And clothed himself withal, poor succour lent
Against Orlando in that combat sore.
Against the churl's right cheek the weapon went:
It failed indeed his tempered helm to bore,
But such a shock he suffered in the strife,
As broke his neck, and stretched him void of life.

LX.

All at one course, of other of the band,
With lance unmoved, he pierced the bosom through;
Left it; on Durindana laid his hand,
And broke into the thickest of the crew:
One head in twain he severed with the brand,
(While, from the shoulders lopt, another flew)
Of many pierced the throat; and in a breath
Above a hundred broke and put to death.

LXI.

Above a third he killed, and chased the rest,
And smote, and pierced, and cleft, as he pursued.
Himself of helm or shield one dispossest;
One with spontoon or bill the champaign strewed.
This one along the road, across it prest
A fourth; this squats in cavern or in wood.
Orlando, without pity, on that day
Lets none escape whom he has power to slay.

LXII.

Of a hundred men and twenty, in that crew,
(So Turpin sums them) eighty died at least.
Thither Orlando finally withdrew,
Where, with a heart sore trembling in his breast,
Zerbino sat; how he at Roland's view
Rejoiced, in verse can hardly be exprest:
Who, but that he was on the hackney bound,
Would at his feet have cast himself to ground.

LXIII.

While Roland, after he had loosed the knight,
Helped him to don his shining arms again;
Stript from those serjeants' captain [6], who had dight
Himself with the good harness, to his pain;
The prince on Isabella turned his sight,
Who had halted on the hill above the plain:
And, after she perceived the strife was o'er,
Nearer the field of fight her beauties bore.

LXIV.

When young Zerbino at his side surveyed
The lady, who by him was held so dear;
The beauteous lady, whom false tongue had said
Was drowned, so often wept with many a tear,
As if ice at his heart-core had been laid,
Waxed cold, and some deal shook the cavalier;
But the chill quickly past, and he, instead,
Was flushed with amorous fire, from foot to head.

LXV.

From quickly clipping her in his embrace,
Him reverence for Anglantes' sovereign stayed;
Because he thought, and held for certain case,
That Roland was a lover of the maid;
So past from pain to pain; and little space
Endured the joy which he at first assayed.
And worse he bore she should another's be,
Than hearing that the maid was drowned at sea.

LXVI.

And worse he grieved, that she was with a knight
To whom he owed so much: because to wrest
The lady from his hands, was neither right,
Nor yet perhaps would prove an easy quest.
He, without quarrel, had no other wight
Suffered to part, of such a prize possest;
But would endure, Orlando (such his debt)
A foot upon his prostrate neck should set.

LXVII.

The three in silence journey to a font,
Where they alight, and halt beside the well;
His helmet here undid the weary Count,
And made the prince too quit the iron shell.
The youth unhelmed, she sees her lover's front,
And pale with sudden joy grows Isabel:
Then, changing, brightened like a humid flower,
When the warm sun succeeds to drenching shower.

LXVIII.

And without more delay or scruple, prest
To cast her arms about her lover dear;
And not a word could draw-forth from her breast,
But bathed his neck and face with briny tear.
Orlando, who remarked the love exprest,
Needing no more to make the matter clear,
Could not but, by these certain tokens, see
This could no other but Zerbino be.

LXIX.

When speech returned, ere yet the maiden well
Had dried her cheeks from the descending tear,
She only of the courtesy could tell
Late shown her by Anglantes' cavalier.
The prince, who in one scale weighed Isabel,
Together with his life, esteemed as dear,—
Fell at Orlando's feet and him adored,
As to two lives at once by him restored.

LXX.

Proffers and thanks had followed, with a round
Of courtesies between the warlike pair,
Had they not heard the covered paths resound,
Which overgrown with gloomy foliage were.
Upon their heads the helmet, late unbound,
They quickly place, and to their steeds repair;
And, lo! a knight and maid arrive, ere well
The cavaliers are seated in the sell.

LXXI.

This was the Tartar Mandricardo, who
In haste behind the paladin had sped,
To venge Alzirdo and Manilard, the two
Whom good Orlando's valour had laid dead:
Though afterwards less eager to pursue,
Since he with him fair Doralice had led;
Whom from a hundred men, in plate and chain,
He, with a simple staff of oak, had ta'en.

LXXII.

Yet knew not that it was Anglantes' peer
This while, of whom he had pursued the beat;
Though that he was a puissant cavalier
By certain signals was he taught to weet.
More than Zerbino him he eyed, and, near,
Perused the paladin from head to feet;
Then finding all the tokens coincide,
"Thou art the man I seek," the paynim cried.

LXXIII.

"'Tis now ten days," to him the Tartar said,
"That thee I still have followed; so the fame
"Had stung me, and in me such longing bred,
"Which of thee to our camp of Paris came:
"When, amid thousands by thy hand laid dead,
"Scarce one alive fled thither, to proclaim
"The mighty havoc made by thy good hand,
"'Mid Tremisena's and Noritia's band.

LXXIV.

"I was not, as I knew, in following slow
"Both to behold thee, and to prove thy might;
"And by the surcoat o'er thine arms I know,
"(Instructed of thy vest) thou' art the knight:
"And if such cognizance thou didst not show,
"And, 'mid a hundred, wert concealed from sight,
"For what thou art thou plainly wouldst appear,
"Thy worth conspicuous in thy haughty cheer."

LXXV.

" No one can say," to him Orlando cried,
" But that a valiant cavalier thou art:
" For such a brave desire can ill reside,
" 'Tis my assurance, in a humble heart.
" Since thou wouldst see me, would that thou *inside*,
" Couldst as *without*, behold me! I apart
" Will lay my helm, that in all points thy will
" And purpose of thy quest I may fulfil.

LXXVI.

" But when thou well hast scanned me with thine eye,
" To that thine other wish as well attend:
" It yet remains for thee to satisfy
" The want, which leads thee after me to wend;
" That thou mayest mark if, in my valour, I
" Agree with that bold cheer thou so commend."
—" And now," (exclaimed the Tartar), "for the rest!
" For my first want is thoroughly redrest."

LXXVII.

Orlando, all this while, from head to feet,
Searches the paynim with inquiring eyes:
Both sides, and next the pommel of his seat
Surveys, yet neither mace nor tuck espies;
And asks, ' how he the combat will repeat,
' If his good lance at the encounter flies.'
—" Take thou no care for that," replied the peer;
" Thus into many have I stricken fear.

LXXVIII.

" I have an oath in Heaven to gird no blade,
" Till Durindana from the count be won.
" Pursuing whom, I through each road here strayed,
" With him to reckon for more posts than one.
" If thou wilt please to hear, my oath I made
" When on my head I placed this morion:
" Which casque, with all the other arms I bear,
" A thousand years ago great Hector's were.

LXXIX.

" To these good arms nought lacks beside the sword;
" How it was stolen, to you I cannot say:
" This now, it seems, is borne by Brava's lord,
" And hence is he so daring in affray.
" Yet well I trust, if I the warrior board,
" To make him render his ill-gotten prey.
" Yet more; I seek the champion with desire
" To avenge the famous Agrican, my sire."

LXXX.

" Him this Orlando slew by treachery,
" I wot, nor could have slain in other wise."
The count could bear no more, and, " 'Tis a lie!"
(Exclaims,) " and whosoever says so, lies:
" Him fairly did I slay; Orlando, I.
" But what thou seekest Fortune here supplies;
" And *this* the faulchion is, which thou hast sought,
" Which shall be thine if by thy valour bought.

LXXXI.

" Although mine is the faulchion, rightfully,
" Let us for it in courtesy contend;
" Nor will I in this battle, that it be
" More mine than thine, but to a tree suspend:
" Bear off the weapon freely hence, if me
" Thou kill or conquer." As he made an end,
He Durindana from his belt unslung,
And in mid-field upon a sapling hung.

LXXXII.

Already distant half the range of bow
Is from his opposite each puissant knight,
And pricks against the other, nothing slow
To slack the reins or ply the rowels bright.
Already dealt is either mighty blow,
Where the helm yields a passage to the sight.
As if of ice, the shattered lances fly,
Broke in a thousand pieces, to the sky.

LXXXIII.

One and the other lance parforce must split,
In that the cavaliers refuse to bend;
The cavaliers, who in the saddle sit,
Returning with the staff's unbroken end.
The warriors, who with steel had ever smit,
Now, as a pair of hinds in rage contend
For the mead's boundary or river's right,
Armed with two clubs, maintain a cruel fight[8].

LXXXIV.

The truncheons which the valiant champions bear,
Fail in the combat, and few blows resist;
Both rage with mightier fury, here and there,
Left without other weapon than the fist;
With this the desperate foes engage, and, where
The hand can grapple, plate and mail untwist.
Let none desire, to guard himself from wrongs,
A heavier hammer or more holding tongs.

LXXXV.

How can the Saracen conclude the fray
With honour, which he haughtily had sought?
'Twere folly to waste time in an assay
Where to himself more harm the smiter wrought
Than to the smitten: in conclusion, they
Closed, and the paynim king Orlando caught,
And strained against his bosom; what Jove's son
Did by Antæus, thinking to have done.

LXXXVI.

Him griped athwart, he, in impetuous mood,
Would now push from him, now would closely strain;
And waxed so wroth that, in his heat of blood,
The Tartar little thought about his rein.
Firm in his stirrups self-collected stood
Roland, and watched his vantage to obtain;
He to the other courser's forehead slipt
His wary hand, and thence the bridle stript.

LXXXVII.

The Saracen assays with all his might
To choak, and from the sell his foeman tear:
With either knee Orlando grasps it tight,
Nor can the Tartar move him, here or there.
But with the straining of the paynim knight,
The girts which hold his saddle broken are.
Scarce conscious of his fall, Orlando lies,
With feet i' the stirrups, tightening yet his thighs.

LXXXVIII.

As falls a sack of armour, with such sound
Tumbled Orlando, when he prest the plain.
King Mandricardo's courser, when he found
His head delivered from the guiding rein,
Made off with him, unheeding what the ground,
Stumbling through woodland, or by pathway plain,
Hither and thither, blinded by his fear;
And bore with him the Tartar cavalier.

LXXXIX.

The beauteous Doralice, who sees her guide
So quit the field,—dismayed at his retreat,
And wonted in his succour to confide,
Her hackney drives behind his courser fleet:
The paynim rates the charger, in his pride,
And smites him oftentimes with hands and feet;
Threatening, as if he understood his lore;
And where he 'd stop the courser, chafes him more.

XC.

Not looking to his feet, by high or low,
The beast of craven kind, with headlong force
Three miles in rings had gone, and more would go,
But that into a fosse which stopt their course,
Not lined with featherbed or quilt below,
Tumble, reversed, the rider and his horse.
On the hard ground was Mandricardo thrown,
Yet neither spoiled himself, nor broke a bone:

XCI.

Here stopt the horse; but him he could not guide,
Left without bit his motions to restrain.
Brimfull of rage and choler, at his side,
The Tartar held him, grappled by the mane.
" Put upon him" (to Mandricardo cried
His lady, Doralice) " my hackney's rein,
" Since for the bridle I have little use;
" For gentle is my palfrey, reined or loose."

XCII.

The paynim deems it were discourtesy
To accept the proffer by the damsel made.
But *his* through other means a rein will be;
Since Fortune, who his wishes well appaid,
Made thitherward the false Gabrina flee,
After she young Zerbino had betrayed:
Who like a she-wolf fled, which, as she hies,
At distance hears the hounds and hunters' cries.

XCIII.

She had upon her back the gallant gear,
And the same youthful ornaments and vest,
Stript from the ill-taught damsel for her jeer,
That in her spoils the beldam might be drest,
And rode the horse that damsel backed whilere;
Who was among the choicest and the best.
Ere yet aware of her, the ancient dame
On Doralice and Mandricardo came.

XCIV.

Stordilané's daughter and the Tartar king
Laugh at the vest of youthful show and shape,
Upon that ancient woman, figuring
Like monkey, rather say, like grandam ape.
From her the Saracen designs to wring
The rein, and does the deed: upon the rape
Of the crone's bridle, he, with angry cry,
Threatens and scares her horse, and makes him fly.

XCV.

He flies and hurries through the forest gray
That ancient woman, almost dead with fear,
By hill and dale, by straight and crooked way,
By fosse and cliff, at hazard, there and here.
But it imports me not so much to say
Of her, that I should leave Anglantes' peer;
Who, from annoyance of a foe released,
The broken saddle at his ease re-pieced.

XCVI.

He mounts his horse, and watches long, before
Departing, if the foe will re-appear;
Nor seeing puissant Mandricardo more,
At last resolves in search of him to steer.
But, as one nurtured well in courtly lore,
From thence departed not the cavalier,
Till he with kind salutes, in friendly strain,
Fair leave had taken of the loving twain.

XCVII.

At his departure waxed Zerbino woe,
And Isabella wept for sorrow: they
Had wended with him, but the count, although
Their company was fair and good, said nay;
Urging for reason, 'Nought so ill could show
'In cavalier, as, when upon his way
'To seek his foeman out, to take a friend,
'Who him with arms might succour or defend.'

XCVIII.

Next, if they met the Saracen, before
They should encounter him, besought them say,
'That he, Orlando, would for three days more,
'Waiting him, in that territory stay:
'But, after that, would seek the flags which bore
'The golden lilies, and King Charles' array.
'That Mandricardo through their means might know,
'If such his pleasure, where to find his foe.'

XCIX.

The lovers promised willingly to do
This, and whatever else he should command.
By different ways the cavaliers withdrew,
One on the right, and one on the left hand.
The count, ere other path he would pursue,
Took from the sapling, and replaced, his brand.
And, where he weened he might the paynim best
Encounter, thitherward his steed addrest.

C.

The course in pathless woods, which, without rein,
The Tartar's charger had pursued astray,
Made Roland for two days, with fruitless pain,
Follow him, without tidings of his way.
Orlando reached a rill of crystal vein,
On either bank of which a meadow lay;
Which, stained with native hues and rich, he sees,
And dotted o'er with fair and many trees.

CI.

The mid-day fervour made the shelter sweet
To hardy herd as well as naked swain;
So that Orlando, well beneath the heat
Some deal might wince, opprest with plate and chain.
He entered, for repose, the cool retreat,
And found it the abode of grief and pain;
And place of sojourn more accursed and fell,
On that unhappy day, than tongue can tell.

CII.

Turning him round, he there, on many a tree,
Beheld engraved, upon the woody shore,
What as the writing of his deity
He knew, as soon as he had marked the lore.
This was a place of those described by me,
Whither ofttimes, attended by Medore,
From the near shepherd's cot had wont to stray
The beauteous lady, sovereign of Catay.

CIII.

In a hundred knots, amid those green abodes,
In a hundred parts, their cyphered names are dight;
Whose many letters are so many goads,
Which Love has in his bleeding heart-core pight.
He would discredit in a thousand modes,
That which he credits in his own despite;
And would parforce persuade himself, *that* rhind
Other Angelica than his had signed.

CIV.

" And yet I know these characters," he cried,
" Of which I have so many read and seen;
" By her may this Medoro be belied,
" And me, she, figured in the name, may mean."
Feeding on such like phantasies, beside
The real truth, did sad Orlando lean
Upon the empty hope, though ill contented,
Which he by self-illusions had fomented.

CV.

But stirred and aye rekindled it, the more
That he to quench the ill suspicion wrought,
Like the incautious bird, by fowler's lore,
Hampered in net or lime; which, in the thought
To free its tangled pinions and to soar,
By struggling, is but more securely caught.
Orlando passes thither, where a mountain
O'erhangs in guise of arch the crystal fountain.

CVI.

Splay-footed ivy, with its mantling spray,
And gadding vine, the cavern's entry case;
Where often in the hottest noon of day
The pair had rested, locked in fond embrace.
Within the grotto, and without it, they
Had oftener than in any other place
With charcoal or with chalk their names pourtrayed,
Or flourished with the knife's indenting blade.

CVII.

Here from his horse the sorrowing County lit,
And at the entrance of the grot surveyed
A cloud of words, which seemed but newly writ,
And which the young Medoro's hand had made.
On the great pleasure he had known in it,
This sentence he in verses had arrayed;
Which in his tongue, I deem, might make pretence
To polished phrase; and such in ours the sense.

CVIII.

" Gay plants, green herbage, rill of limpid vein,
" And, grateful with cool shade, thou gloomy cave,
" Where oft, by many wooed with fruitless pain,
" Beauteous Angelica, the child of grave
" King Galaphron, within my arms has lain;
" For the convenient harbourage you gave,
" I, poor Medoro, can but in my lays,
" As recompence, for ever sing your praise.

CIX.

" And any loving lord devoutly pray,
" Damsel and cavalier, and every one,
" Whom choice or fortune hither shall convey,
" Stranger or native,—to this crystal run,
" Shade, caverned rock, and grass, and plants, to say,
" *Benignant be to you the fostering sun*
" *And moon, and may the choir of nymphs provide,*
" *That never swain his flock may hither guide!*"

CX.

In Arabic was writ the blessing said,
Known to Orlando like the Latin tongue,
Who, versed in many languages, best read
Was in this speech; which oftentimes from wrong,
And injury, and shame, had saved his head,
What time he roved the Saracens among.
But let him boast not of its former boot,
O'erbalanced by the present bitter fruit.

CXI.

Three times, and four, and six, the lines imprest
Upon the stone that wretch perused, in vain
Seeking another sense than was exprest,
And ever saw the thing more clear and plain;
And all the while, within his troubled breast,
He felt an icy hand his heart-core strain.
With mind and eyes close fastened on the block,
At length he stood, not differing from the rock.

CXII.

Then well-nigh lost all feeling; so a prey
Wholly was he to that o'ermastering woe.
This is a pang, believe the experienced say
Of him who speaks, which does all griefs outgo.
His pride had from his forehead passed away,
His chin had fallen upon his breast below;
Nor found he, so grief barred each natural vent,
Moisture for tears, or utterance for lament.

CXIII.

Stifled within, the impetuous sorrow stays,
Which would too quickly issue; so to abide
Water is seen, imprisoned in the vase,
Whose neck is narrow and whose swell is wide;
What time, when one turns up the inverted base,
Towards the mouth, so hastes the hurrying tide,
And in the streight encounters such a stop,
It scarcely works a passage, drop by drop.

CXIV.

He somewhat to himself returned, and thought
How possibly the thing might be untrue:
That some one (so he hoped, desired, and sought
To think) his lady would with shame pursue;
Or with such weight of jealousy had wrought
To whelm *his* reason, as should him undo;
And that he, whosoe'er the thing had planned,
Had counterfeited passing well her hand.

CXV.

With such vain hope he sought himself to cheat,
And manned some deal his spirits and awoke;
Then prest the faithful Brigliadoro's seat,
As on the sun's retreat his sister broke.
Nor far the warrior had pursued his beat,
Ere eddying from a roof he saw the smoke;
Heard noise of dog and kine, a farm espied,
And thitherward in quest of lodging hied.

CXVI.

Languid, he lit, and left his Brigliador
To a discreet attendant: one undrest
His limbs, one doffed the golden spurs he wore,
And one bore off, to clean, his iron vest.
This was the homestead where the young Medore
Lay wounded, and was here supremely blest.
Orlando here, with other food unfed,
Having supt full of sorrow, sought his bed.

CXVII.

The more the wretched sufferer seeks for ease,
He finds but so much more distress and pain;
Who every where the loathed hand-writing sees,
On wall, and door, and window: he would fain
Question his host of this, but holds his peace,
Because, in sooth, he dreads too clear, too plain
To make the thing, and this would rather shrowd,
That it may less offend him, with a cloud.

CXVIII.

Little availed the count his self-deceit;
For there was one who spake of it unsought;
The shepherd-swain, who to allay the heat,
With which he saw his guest so troubled, thought:
The tale which he was wonted to repeat
—Of the two lovers—to each listener taught,
A history which many loved to hear,
He now, without reserve, 'gan tell the peer.

CXIX.

'How at Angelica's persuasive prayer,
'He to his farm had carried young Medore,
'Grievously wounded with an arrow; where,
'In little space she healed the angry sore.
'But while she exercised this pious care,
'Love in her heart the lady wounded more,
'And kindled from small spark so fierce a fire,
'She burnt all over, restless with desire:

CXX.

'Nor thinking she of mightiest king was born,
'Who ruled in the east, nor of her heritage,
'Forced by too puissant love, had thought no scorn
'To be the consort of a poor foot-page.'
—His story done, to them in proof was borne
The gem, which, in reward for harbourage,
To her extended in that kind abode,
Angelica, at parting, had bestowed.

CXXI.

A deadly axe was this unhappy close,
Which, at a single stroke, lopt off the head;
When, satiate with innumerable blows,
That cruel hangman Love his hate had fed.
Orlando studied to conceal his woes;
And yet the mischief gathered force and spread,
And would break out parforce in tears and sighs,
Would he, or would he not, from mouth and eyes.

CXXII.

When he can give the rein to raging woe,
Alone, by other's presence unreprest,
From his full eyes the tears descending flow,
In a wide stream, and flood his troubled breast.
'Mid sob and groan, he tosses to and fro
About his weary bed, in search of rest;
And vainly shifting, harder than a rock
And sharper than a nettle found its flock.

CXXIII.

Amid the pressure of such cruel pain,
It past into the wretched sufferer's head,
That oft the ungrateful lady must have lain,
Together with her leman, on that bed:
Nor less he loathed the couch in his disdain,
Nor from the down upstarted with less dread,
Than churl, who, when about to close his eyes,
Springs from the turf, if he a serpent spies.

CXXIV.

In him, forthwith, such deadly hatred breed
That bed, that house, that swain, he will not stay
Till the morn break, or till the dawn succeed,
Whose twilight goes before approaching day.
In haste, Orlando takes his arms and steed,
And to the deepest greenwood wends his way.
And, when assured that he is there alone,
Gives utterance to his grief in shriek and groan.

CXXV.

Never from tears, never from sorrowing,
He paused; nor found he peace by night or day:
He fled from town, in forest harbouring,
And in the open air on hard earth lay.
He marvelled at himself, how such a spring
Of water from his eyes could stream away,
And breath was for so many sobs supplied;
And thus ofttimes, amid his mourning, cried

CXXVI.

" These are no longer real tears which rise,
" And which I scatter from so full a vein[9].
" Of tears my ceaseless sorrow lacked supplies;
" They stopt when to mid-height scarce rose my pain.
" The vital moisture rushing to my eyes,
" Driven by the fire within me, now would gain
" A vent; and it is this which I expend,
" And which my sorrows and my life will end.

CXXVII.

" No; these, which are the index of my woes,
" These are not sighs, nor sighs are such; they fail
" At times, and have their season of repose:
" I feel, my breast can never less exhale
" Its sorrow: Love, who with his pinions blows
" The fire about my heart, creates this gale.
" Love, by what miracle dost thou contrive,
" It wastes not in the fire thou keep'st alive?

CXXVIII.

" I am not—am not what I seem to sight:
" What Roland was is dead and under ground,
" Slain by that most ungrateful lady's spite,
" Whose faithlessness inflicted such a wound.
" Divided from the flesh, I am his sprite,
" Which in this hell, tormented, walks its round[10],
" To be, but in its shadow left above,
" A warning to all such as trust in love."

CXXIX.

All night about the forest roved the count,
And, at the break of daily light, was brought
By his unhappy fortune to the fount,
Where his inscription young Medoro wrought.
To see his wrongs inscribed upon that mount,
Inflamed his fury so, in him was nought
But turned to hatred, phrensy, rage, and spite;
Nor paused he more, but bared his faulchion bright;

CXXX.

Cleft through the writing; and the solid block,
Into the sky, in tiny fragments sped.
Wo worth each sapling and that caverned rock,
Where Medore and Angelica were read!
So scathed, that they to shepherd or to flock
Thenceforth shall never furnish shade or bed.
And that sweet fountain, late so clear and pure,
From such tempestuous wrath was ill secure.

CXXXI.

For he turf, stone, and trunk, and shoot, and lop,
Cast without cease into the beauteous source;
Till, turbid from the bottom to the top,
Never again was clear the troubled course.
At length, for lack of breath, compelled to stop,
(When he is bathed in sweat, and wasted force,
Serves not his fury more) he falls, and lies
Upon the mead, and, gazing upward, sighs.

CXXXII.

Wearied and woe-begone, he fell to ground,
And turned his eyes toward heaven; nor spake he aught,
Nor ate, nor slept, till in his daily round
The golden sun had broken thrice, and sought
His rest anew; nor ever ceased his wound
To rankle, till it marred his sober thought.
At length, impelled by phrensy, the fourth day,
He from his limbs tore plate and mail away.

CXXXIII.

Here was his helmet; there his shield bestowed;
His arms far off; and, farther than the rest,
His cuirass; through the greenwood wide was strowed
All his good gear, in fine; and next his vest
He rent; and, in his fury, naked showed
His shaggy paunch, and all his back and breast.
And 'gan that phrensy act, so passing dread,
Of stranger folly never shall be said.

CXXXIV.

So fierce his rage, so fierce his fury grew,
That all obscured remained the warrior's sprite;
Nor, for forgetfulness, his sword he drew,
Or wonderous deeds, I trow, had wrought the knight:
But neither this, nor bill, nor axe to hew,
Was needed by Orlando's peerless might.
He of his prowess gave high proofs and full,
Who a tall pine uprooted at a pull.

CXXXV.

He many others, with as little let
As fennel, wall-wort-stem, or dill, up-tore;
And ilex, knotted oak, and fir upset,
And beech, and mountain-ash, and elm-tree hoar.
He did what fowler, ere he spreads his net,
Does, to prepare the champaigne for his lore,
By stubble, rush, and nettle-stalk; and broke,
Like these, old sturdy trees and stems of oak.

CXXXVI.

The shepherd swains, who hear the tumult nigh,
Leaving their flocks beneath the greenwood tree,
Some here some there across the forest hie,
And hurry thither, all, the cause to see.
—But I have reached such point, my history,
If I o'erpass this bound, may irksome be;
And I my story will delay to end,
Rather than by my tediousness offend.

NOTES TO CANTO XXIII.

1.

" *Nor have I one, Hippalca mine, more sage*
" *And sure than thee, to do my embassage.*"

Stanza xxix. lines 7 and 8.

The name of *Callitrephia*, applied to the nurse, and that of *Hippalca* to the damsel, who has charge of the horse, would seem to indicate that Ariosto was not *so* ignorant of Greek as he is supposed to have been.

2.

On the first courser he should find, the knight
Had sworn a solemn oath his hands to lay.

Stanza xxxiv. lines 1 and 2.

Such oaths are common in romance, and were not once without example in real history. Froissart speaks of seeing certain English nobles with one eye blinded with a patch, which they had sworn not to uncover till they should have made a certain number of prisoners in the French wars.

3.

" *I needs must pay the hire as well as horse;*
" *And be the price at the option of the knight!*"

Stanza xxxvi. lines 3 and 4.

This passage, which is in the original

Non che il destrier ma la vettura darli
Converrammi, e in suo arbitrio fia la taglia,

has been hitherto mistranslated, probably from ignorance of the meaning of *vettura* in this place, which is synonymous with that of *nolo* or *hire*.

4.

A spacious town, which Altaripa hight,
Journeying the twain, at two miles' distance spy.
Stanza xliv. lines 1 and 2.

Quindi presso a duo miglia ritrovaro
Un *gran castel* che fu detto Altariva.

There can be no doubt that *castello* is *here* to be translated a town, notwithstanding all translators having made it a castle; for in another stanza the poet lodges Zerbino in it, at an inn, and describes the *towns-people* (*terrazzani*) as rising and blockading it.

To block the hostel where Zerbino lay,
For all the town is risen, the father sends.

6.

Stript from the serjeants' captain, &c.
Stanza lxiii. line 3.

So police-officers (in the original *sbirri*) were anciently termed, and a great dramatic author talks of a man being arrested 'by that fell serjeant, Death.' The term (as it is well known to those acquainted with the usages of the middle ages) is the translation or corruption of the Latin word *serviens*, and in its simple acceptation means servant. Hence *serviens ad legem* is a serjeant at law, *serviens ad arma*, a serjeant at arms, &c.

7.

"*Yet more; I seek the champion with desire*
"*To avenge the famous Agrican, my sire.*
Stanza lxxix. lines 7 and 8.

"*Him this Orlando slew by treachery, &c.*
Stanza lxxx. line 1.

Though this assertion is in character with Mandricardo,

there is no colour for it in the story of the *Innamorato*. Agrican, king of Tartary, and father of Mandricardo, who is one of the most distinguished heroes of that poem, was slain by Orlando in single combat. Having fought during the greater part of a day, the two duellists were interrupted by night, and lay down, side by side, for the purpose of repose. Entering now into conversation,

> ' Fast they carped and courteously,
> ' Of deeds of arms and of venerie,' &c.

in the true spirit of knights-errant. Unfortunately, however, they were of less endurance in the war of words than in that of blows, and each feeling himself less capable of maintaining his opinion by sayings than doings, was impatient to renew the battle. The battle *was* renewed, and Agrican, after many vicissitudes of fortune, mortally wounded. Orlando had by this time sufficiently inculcated the necessity of baptism, which Agrican had before contemptuously refused; and the conqueror, alighting from his horse, administers this rite, with a tenderness which forms a whimsical contrast to the other part of the adventure.

> While tears descending bathed his manly face,
> The gentle count dismounted to his aid,
> Then locked the wounded knight in his embrace,
> Upon the fountain's grassy border laid;
> And kiss'd his fading lips, and sought his grace,
> And of the mischief done forgiveness prayed:
> The speechless Tartar king his head inclined,
> And with the cross his brows Orlando signed.
>
> Then having to his sorrow found that he
> Was breathless, and all vital warmth was fled,
> Believed his gallant spirit was set free,
> And by the crystal fountain left him dead,
> Clad as he was in armour cap-a-pè,
> With sword in hand, and crown upon his head.
>
> See *The Innamorato*, book ii.

8.

The warriors, who with steel had ever smit,
Now, as a pair of hinds in rage contend
For the mead's boundary or river's right,
Armed with two staves, maintain a cruel fight.
Stanza lxxxiii. lines 5, 6, 7, 8.

Two hinds contending for the mead's boundary, may appear a more natural image to an Englishman, unless conversant with a water-meadow-district, than their contending for the *water's right*, but to an Italian must appear to the full as probable a cause of quarrel. And Mr. Forsyth (the acute author of *Remarks upon Italy*) would derive rivalry (*rivalitas*) from the *river* quarrels of the ancient inhabitants of Italy.

9.

These are no longer real tears which rise,
And which I scatter from so full a vein, &c.
Stanza cxxvi. lines 1 and 2.

The introduction of so miserable a conceit as that contained in the present and succeeding stanza into such an exquisite description of natural passion, is no doubt a foul blot; but we must remember that this was the vice of Ariosto's age and that which succeeded it; and that Shakespeare is deformed by many more such puerilities. The fair critic who is really conversant with Italian literature must indeed confess that the highly distinguished Italian poets (among whom I do not reckon the *Guidis*, *Chiabreras*, *&c.*) are, notwithstanding the vulgar reproach, much freer from the *concetti* ascribed to them than those of the same age, or even a much later age, either in England or France; but the French and English confer a dignity upon many Italian writers which is not attributed to them by *judicious critics* of Italy, and then pronounce upon Italian poetry as it appears in the writings of these men. It is under this delusion that half the world till lately only considered Italian as the language of love, as diffuse as sweet, and were ignorant of its marvellous

force and concentration, when in the management of a Dante, Machiavel, or Alfieri.

To return to Ariosto's picture of Orlando's madness, and the exquisite accumulation of circumstances by which it is produced and aggravated; it may be remarked that the poet has given great effect to these by laying his scene in the spot which he has chosen. Upon the same principle, he has sent Mandricardo and Doralice to consummate their loves in a rustic retirement; and while the solitude of the country gives more relief to pictures of passion or manners, in works of fiction, it would seem that it charmed us also by the mere repose which it affords. Don Quixote is never so interesting as at the Duke's, nor the Spectator as at Sir Roger de Coverley's. Shakespeare, when he has almost worn out Falstaff, presents him to us as fresh as ever, eating a dish of caraways and pippins in Master Shallow's orchard; and though hardly any thing remarkable is said or done by either of them, we delight in watching Gil Blas and Scipio at *Lirias*, and contemplate them with pleasure when taking their *siesta* under its shades.

10.

I am not—am not what I seem to sight:
What Roland was is dead and under ground.
. . . . .
. . . . .
Divided from the flesh, I am his sprite,
Which in this hell, tormented, walks its round.
Stanza cxxviii. lines 1, 2. 5, 6.

Non ego, sed tenuis vapulat umbra mea.
CATULLUS.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Odorico's and Gabrina's guilt repaid,
Youthful Zerbino sets at large the train;
He in defence of good Orlando's blade,
Is afterwards by Mandricardo slain.
Isabel weeps; by Rodomont is made
War on the Tartar king, and truce again,
To succour Agramant and his array;
Who to the lilies are well-nigh a prey.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIV.

I.

Let him make haste his feet to disengage,
Nor lime his wings, whom Love has made a prize;
For love, in fine, is nought but phrensied rage,
By universal suffrage of the wise:
And albeit some may show themselves more sage
Than Roland, they but sin in other guise.
For, what proves folly more than on this shelf,
Thus, for another, to destroy oneself?

II.

Various are love's effects; but from one source
All issue, though they lead a different way.
He is, as 'twere, a forest, where parforce
Who enter its recesses go astray;
And here and there pursue their devious course [1]:
In sum, to you I, for conclusion, say;
He who grows old in love, besides all pain
Which waits such passion, well deserves a chain.

III.

One here may well reproach me; "Brother, thou
"Seest not thy faults, while thou dost others fit."
—I answer, that, "I see mine plain enow,
"In this my lucid interval of wit;
"And strive and hope withal I shall forego
"This dance of folly; but yet cannot quit,
"As quickly as I would, the faults I own;
"For my disease has reached the very bone."

IV.

I in the other canto said before,
Orlando, furious and insensate wight,
Having torn off the arms and vest he wore,
And cast away from him his faulchion bright,
And up-torn trees, and made the forest hoar
And hollow cave resound, and rocky height,
Towards the noise some shepherds, on that side,
Their heavy sins or evil planets guide.

V.

Viewing the madman's wonderous feats more near,
The frighted band of rustics turned and fled;
But they, in their disorder, knew not where,
As happens oftentimes in sudden dread.
The madman in a thought is in their rear,
Seizes a shepherd, and plucks off his head;
And this as easily as one might take
Apple from tree, or blossom from the brake.

VI.

He by one leg the heavy trunk in air
Upheaved, and made a mace the rest to bray.
Astounded, upon earth he stretched one pair,
Who haply may awake at the last day.
The rest, who well advised and nimble are,
At once desert the field and scour away:
Nor had the madman their pursuit deferred,
Had he not turned already on their herd.

VII.

By such examples warned, the rustic crew
Abandoned in the fields pick, scythe, and plough,
And to the roof of house and temple flew,
(For ill secure was elm or willow's bough,)
From hence the maniac's horrid rage they view;
Who, dealing kick, and bite, and scratch, and blow,
Horses and oxen slew, his helpless prey;
And well the courser ran who 'scaped that day.

VIII.

Already might'st thou hear how loudly ring
The hubbub and the din, from neighbouring farms,
Outcry and horn, and rustic trumpeting;
And faster sound of bells; with various arms,
By thousands, with spontoon, bow, spit, and sling,
Lo! from the hills the rough militia swarms.
As many peasants from the vale below,
To make rude war upon the madman go,

IX.

As beats the wave upon the salt-sea shore,
Sportive at first, which southern wind has stirred,
When the next, bigger than what went before,
And bigger than the second, breaks the third;
And the vext water waxes evermore,
And louder on the beach the surf is heard:
The crowd, increasing so, the count assail,
And drop from mountain and ascend from dale.

X.

Twice he ten peasants slaughtered in his mood,
Who, charging him in disarray, were slain;
And this experiment right clearly showed
To stand aloof was safest for the train.
Was none who from his body could draw blood;
For iron smote the impassive skin in vain.
So had heaven's King preserved the count from scathe,
To make him guardian of his holy faith.

XI.

He would have been in peril on that day,
Had he been made of vulnerable mould;
And might have learned what 'twas to cast away
His sword, and, weaponless, so play the bold.
The rustic troop retreated from the fray,
Seeing no stroke upon the madman told.
Since him no other enemy attends,
Orlando to a neighbouring township wends.

XII.

Since every one had left the place for dread,
No wight he found within it, small or great:
But here was homely food in plenty spread,
Victual, well sorting with the pastoral state.
Here, acorns undistinguishing from bread[8],
By tedious fast and fury driven to sate
His hunger, he employed his hand and jaw
On what he first discovered, cooked or raw.

XIII.

Thence, repossest with the desire to rove,
He, through the land, did man and beast pursue;
And scowering, in his phrensy, wood and grove,
Took sometimes goat or doe of dappled hue:
Often with bear and with wild boar he strove,
And with his naked hand the brutes o'erthrew;
And gorging oftentimes the savage fare,
Swallowed the prey with all its skin and hair.

XIV.

Now right, now left, he wandered, far and wide,
Throughout all France, and reached a bridge one day;
Beneath which ran an ample water's tide,
Of steep and broken banks: a turret gray
Was builded by the spacious river's side,
Discerned, from far and near, and every way.
What here he did I shall relate elsewhere,
Who first must make the Scottish prince my care.

XV.

When Roland had departed on his quest,
Zerbino paused some deal; then, in his rear,
Slowly his steed by the same path addrest,
Which had been taken by Anglantes' peer;
Nor two miles on his way, I think, had prest,
When he beheld a captive cavalier,
Upon a sorry, little, hackney tied,
And by armed horseman watched on either side.

XVI.

Zerbino speedily the prisoner knew,
And Isabel, as soon; when nigh surveyed.
This was Sir Odoric, the Biscayan, who,
Like wolf, the guardian of a lamb was made:
To whom, of all his friends esteemed most true,
Zerbino Isabella had conveyed;
Hoping, one hitherto by him found just,
Would now, as ever, have approved his trust.

XVII.

Even then how all had chanced, with punctual lore,
Was Isabel relating to the knight;
'How in the pinnace she was saved, before
'The broken vessel sank at sea outright;
'Odoric's assault; and next, how bandits bore
'Her to the cavern, in a mountain dight.'
Nor Isabella yet her tale has told,
When bound the malefactor they behold.

XVIII.

The two that had Sir Odoric in their ward,
The royal damsel Isabella knew;
And deemed he was her lover and her lord,
That pricked beside the lady, fair of hue[8].
More; that the bearings on his shield record
The honours of the stem from which he grew;
And found, as better they observed his cheer,
They had judged rightly of the cavalier.

XIX.

Lighting, with open arms and hurried pace,
They make towards Zerbino eagerly,
And, kneeling, with bare head, the prince embrace,
Where lord is clipt by one of less degree.
Zerbino, looking either in the face,
Knows one Corebo of Biscay to be,
And Sir Almonio, his co-mate; the pair
Charged, under Odoric, with the galley's care.

XX.

Almonio cried, "Since God is pleased in the end,
"Grammercy! Isabel should be with you;
"My lord, I very clearly comprehend
"I should deliver tidings, nothing new,
"If I should now inform you why I wend
"With this offender, whom with me you view.
"Since he, who at his hands has suffered worst,
"The story of his crimes will have rehearsed.

XXI.

" How me that traitour duped thou hast not to learn,
" What time he rid himself of me, nor how
" Corebo, who would have avenged the scorn,
" Intended to the damsel, was laid low:
" But that which followed, upon my return,
" By her unseen or heard, she cannot know,
" So as to thee the story to have told;
" The sequel of it then will I unfold.

XXII.

" I seaward from the city, with a store
" Of nags, collected in a hurry, fare;
" Aye watchful, if the trace I can explore
" Of those left far behind me; I repair
" Thitherward; I arrive upon the shore,
" The place where they were left; look everywhere;
" Nor sign of them perceive upon that strand,
" Except some steps, new-printed on the sand.

XXIII.

" The steps I traced into the forest drear;
" Nor far within the greenwood had I wound,
" When, guided by a noise which smote my ear,
" I saw my comrade bleeding on the ground:
" Of Isabel I asked the cavalier,
" Of Odoric, and what hand had dealt his wound;
" And thence departed, when the thing I knew,
" Seeking the wretch these precipices through.

XXIV.

" Wide circling still I go, and through that day
" I find no other sign of him that fled;
" At length return to where Corebo lay,
" Who had the ground about him dyed so red,
" That he, had I made little more delay,
" A grave would have required, and, more than bed
" And succour of the leech, to make him sound,
" Craved priest and friar to lay him in the ground.

XXV.

" I had him to the neighbouring city brought,
" And boarded with a friendly host; and there
" Corebo's cure in little time was wrought,
" Beneath an old chirurgeon's skilful care.
" This finished, having arms and horses bought,
" We thence together to the court repair
" Of King Alphonso of Biscay; where I
" Find out the traitor, and to fight defy.

XXVI.

" The monarch's justice, who fair field and free
" Allowed us for the duel, and my right,
" And Destiny to boot (for Destiny
" Oftener makes conquest where she listeth, light)
" So backed my arms, *that* felon was by me
" Worsted, and made a prisoner in the fight.
" Alphonso, having heard his guilt confessed,
" Bade me dispose of him as liked me best.

XXVII.

" Him would I neither loose, nor yet have slain,
" " But, as thou seest, in bonds to thee convey:
" That whether he should be condemned to pain,
" Or death, it should be thine his doom to say.
" I, hearing thou wert with King Charlemagne,
" Thither, in hope to find thee, took my way.
" I thank my God, that thee upon this ground,
" Where I least hoped to meet thee, I have found.

XXVIII.

" As well I render thanks, that Isabel
" I see restored to thee, I know not how,
" Of whom, by reason of that traitor fell,
" I deemed thou never more should'st tidings know."
In silence prince Zerbino hears him tell
His story, gazing upon Odoric's brow,
In pity, more than hate, as he perpends
How foully such a goodly friendship ends.

XXIX.

After Almonio had his tale suspended,
Astounded for a while the prince stood by;
Wondering, that he who least should have offended,
Had him requited with such treachery:
But, his long fit of admiration ended,
Waking from his amazement with a sigh,
Questioned the prisoner in the horsemen's hold,
If that was true the cavalier had told.

XXX.

The faithless man alighted, and down fell
Upon his bended knees[4], and answered; "Sir,
"All people that on middle earth do dwell,
"Through weakness of their nature, sin and err.
"One thing alone distinguishes the well
"And evil doer; *this*, at every stir
"Of least desire, submits, without a blow;
"*That* arms, but yields as well to stronger foe.

XXXI.

"Had I been charged some castle to maintain,
"And, without contest, on the first assault,
"Hoisted the banners of the hostile train,
"—For cowardice, or treason, fouler fault—
"Upon my eyes (a well deserved pain)
"Thou might'st have justly closed the darksome vault;
"But, yielding to superior force, I read
"I should not merit blame, but praise and meed.

XXXII.

"The stronger is the enemy, the more
"Easily is the vanquished side excused:
"I could but faith maintain as, girded sore,
"The leaguered fort to keep *her* faith is used;
"Even so, with all the sense, with all the lore
"By sovereign wisdom into me infused,
"This I essayed to keep; but in the end,
"To o'ermastering assault was forced to bend."

XXXIII.

So said Sir Odoric; and after showed
(Though 'twere too tedious to recount his suit)
Him no light cause had stirred, but puissant goad.
—If ever earnestness of prayer could boot
To melt a heart that with resentment glowed,
—If e'er humility produced good fruit,
It well might here avail; since all that best
Moves a hard heart, Sir Odoric now exprest.

XXXIV.

Whether or no to venge such infamy,
Youthful Zerbino doubted: the review
Of faithless Odorico's treachery
Moved him to death the felon to pursue;
The recollection of the amity
So long maintained between them, with the dew
Of pity cooled the fury in his mind,
And him to mercy towards the wretch inclined.

XXXV.

While Scotland's prince is doubting in such wise
To keep him captive, or to loose his chain;
Or to remove him from before his eyes,
By dooming him to die, or live in pain;
Loud neighing, thitherward the palfrey hies
From which the Tartar king had stript the rein;
And the old harridan, who had before
Nigh caused Zerbino's death, among them bore.

XXXVI.

The horse, that had the others of that band
Heard at a distance, thither her conveyed.
Sore weeping came the old woman, and demand
For succour, in her trouble, vainly made.
Zerbino, when he saw her, raised his hand
To heaven, that had to him such grace displayed,
Giving him to decide that couple's fate;
The only two that had deserved his hate.

XXXVII.

The wicked hag is kept, so bids the peer,
Until he is determined what to do:
He to cut off her nose and either ear
Now thought, and her as an example shew.
Next, 'twere far better, deemed the cavalier,
If to the vultures he her carcase threw:
He diverse punishments awhile revolved,
And thus the warrior finally resolved.

XXXVIII.

He to his comrades turned him round, and said;
"To let the traitour live I am content,
"Who, if full grace he has not merited,
"Yet merits not to be so foully shent.
"I, as I find his fault of Love was bred,
"To give him life and liberty consent;
"And easily we all excuses own,
"When on commanding Love the blame is thrown.

XXXIX.

" Often has Love turned upside down a brain
" Of sounder wit than *that* to him assigned,
" And led to mischief of far deeper stain,
" Than has so outraged us. Let Odoric find
" Pardon for his offences; *I* the pain
" Of these should justly suffer, who was blind;
" Blind when I gave him such a trust, nor saw
" How easily the fire consumes the straw."

XL.

Then gazing upon Odoric, 'gan say;
" This is the penance I enjoin to thee;
" That thou a year shalt with the beldam stay,
" Nor ever leave this while her company;
" But, roving or at rest, by night or day,
" Shalt never for an hour without her be;
" And her shall even unto death maintain
" Against whoever threatens her with pain.

XLI.

" I will, if so this woman shall command,
" With whosoe'er he be, thou battle do.
" I will this while that thou all France's land,
" From city shalt to city, wander through."
So says he: for as Odoric at his hand
Well merits death, for his foul trespass due,
This is a pitfall for his feet to shape,
Which it will be rare fortune if he 'scape.

XLII.

So many women, many men betrayed,
And wronged by her, have been so many more,
Not without strife by knight shall *he* be stayed,
Who has beneath his care the beldam hoar.
So, for their crimes, shall both alike be paid;
She for her evil actions done before,
And *he* who wrongfully shall her defend;
Nor far can go before he finds an end.

XLIII.

To keep the pact Zerbino makes him swear
A mighty oath, under this penalty,
That should he break his faith, and anywhere
Into his presence led by fortune be,
Without more mercy, without time for prayer,
A cruel death shall wait him, as his fee.
Next by his comrades (so their lord commands)
Sir Odoric is unpinioned from his bands.

XLIV.

Corebo frees the traitor in the end,
Almonio yielding, yet as ill content:
For much Zerbino's mercies both offend,
Which thus their so desired revenge prevent.
Thence, he disloyal to his prince and friend,
In company with that curst woman went.
What these befel Sir Turpin has not said,
But more I once in other author read.

XLV.

This author vouches (I declare not who)
'That hence they had not one day's journey wended,
'When Odoric, to all pact, all faith, untrue,
'For riddance of the pest to him commended,
'About Gabrina's neck a halter threw,
'And left her to a neighbouring elm suspended;
'And in a year (the place he does not name)
'Almonio by the traitor did the same.'

XLVI.

Zerbino, who the Paladin pursues,
And loath would be to lose the cavalier,
To his Scottish squadron of himself sends news,
Which for its captain well might stand in fear;
Almonio sends, and many matters shews,
Too long at full to be recited here;
Almonio sends, Corebo next; nor stayed
Other with him, besides the royal maid.

XLVII.

So mighty is the love Zerbino bore,
Nor less than his the love which Isabel
Nursed for the valorous Paladin, so sore
He longed to know if that bold infidel
The Count had found, who in the duel tore
Him from his horse, together with the sell,
That he to Charles's camp, till the third day
Be ended, will not measure back his way.

XLVIII.

This was the term for which Orlando said
He should wait *him*, who yet no faulchion wears;
Nor is there place the Count has visited,
But thither in his search Zerbino fares.
Last to those trees, upon whose bark was read
The ungrateful lady's writing, he repairs,
Little beside the road; and there finds all
In strange disorder, rock and water-fall.

XLIX.

Far off, he saw that something shining lay,
And spied Orlando's corslet on the ground;
And next his helm; but not that head-piece gay
Which whilom African Almontes crowned:
He in the thicket heard a courser neigh,
And, lifting up his visage at the sound,
Saw Brigliadoro the green herbage browze,
With rein yet hanging at his saddle-bows.

L.

For Durindane, he sought the greenwood, round,
Which separate from the scabbard met his view;
And next the surcoat, but in tatters, found;
That, in a hundred rags, the champaign strew.
Zerbino and Isabel, in grief profound,
Stood looking-on, nor what to think they knew:
They of all matters else might think, besides
The fury which the wretched Count misguides,

LI.

Had but the lovers seen a drop of blood,
They might have well believed Orlando dead:
This while the pair, beside the neighbouring flood,
Beheld a shepherd coming, pale with dread.
He just before, as on a rock he stood,
Had seen the wretch's fury; how he shed
His arms about the forest, tore his clothes,
Slew hinds, and caused a thousand other woes.

LII.

Questioned by good Zerbino, him the swain
Of all which there had chanced, informed aright.
Zerbino marvelled, and believed with pain,
Although the proofs were clear: This as it might,
He from his horse dismounted on the plain,
Full of compassion, in afflicted plight;
And went about, collecting from the ground
The various relics which were scattered round.

LIII.

Isabel lights as well; and, where they lie
Dispersed, the various arms uniting goes.
Lo! them a damsel joins, who frequent sigh
Heaves from her heart, and doleful visage shows.
If any ask me who the dame, and why
She mourns, and with such sorrow overflows;
I say 'twas Flordelice, who, bound in trace
Of her lost lover's footsteps, sought that place.

LIV.

Her Brandimant had left disconsolate
Without farewell, i' the court of Charlemagne:
Who there expected him six months or eight;—
And lastly, since he came not there again,
From sea to sea, had sought her absent mate,
Through Alpine and through Pyrenean chain:
In every place had sought the warrior, save
Within the palace of Atlantes' grave.

LV.

If she had been in that enchanted hold,
She might before have seen the cavalier
Wandering with Bradamant, Rogero bold,
Gradasso and Ferrau and Brava's peer*.
But, when Astolpho chased the wizard old,
With the loud bugle, horrible to hear,
To Paris he returned; but nought of this
As yet was known to faithful Flordelice.

LVI.

To Flordelice were known the arms and sword
(Who, as I say, by chance so joined the twain),
And Brigliadoro, left without his lord,
Yet bearing at the saddle-bow his rein:
She with her eyes the unhappy signs explored,
And she had heard the tidings of the swain,
Who had alike related, how he viewed
Orlando running frantic, in his mood.

* Orlando.

LVII.

Here prince Zerbino all the arms unites,
And hangs, like a fair trophy, on a pine.
And, to preserve them safe from errant knights,
Natives or foreigners, in one short line
Upon the sapling's verdant surface writes,
ORLANDO'S ARMS, KING CHARLES'S PALADINE.
As he would say, 'Let none this harness move,
Who cannot with its lord his prowess prove!'

LVIII.

Zerbino having done the pious deed,
Is bowning him to climb his horse; when, lo!
The Tartar king arrives upon the mead.
He, at the trophied pine-tree's gorgeous show,
Beseeches him the cause of this to read;
Who lets him (as rehearsed) the story know.
When, without further pause, the paynim lord
Hastes gladly to the pine, and takes the sword.

LIX.

"None can (he said) the action reprehend,
"Nor first I make the faulchion mine to-day[5];
"And to its just possession I pretend
"Where'er I find it, be it where it may.
"Orlando, this not daring to defend,
"Has feigned him mad, and cast the sword away;
"But if the champion so excuse his sham,
"This is no cause I should forego my claim.

LX.

" Take it not thence," to him Zerbino cried,
" Nor think to make it thine without a fight:
" If so thou tookest Hector's arms of pride,
" By theft thou hadst them, rather than by right."
Without more parley spurred upon each side,
Well matched in soul and valour, either knight.
Already echoed are a thousand blows;
Nor yet well entered are the encountering foes.

LXI.

In scaping Durindane, a flame in show
(He shifts so quickly) is the Scottish lord.
He leaps about his courser like a doe,
Where'er the road best footing does afford.
And well it is that he should not forego
An inch of vantage; who, if once that sword
Smite him, will join the enamoured ghosts, which rove
Amid the mazes of the myrtle grove.

LXII.

As the swift-footed dog, who does espy
Swine severed from his fellows, hunts him hard,
And circles round about; but *he* lies by
Till once the restless foe neglect his guard;
So, while the sword descends, or hangs on high,
Zerbino stands, attentive how to ward,
How to save life and honour from surprise;
And keeps a wary eye, and smites and flies.

LXIII.

On the other side, where'er the foe is seen
To threaten stroke in vain, or make it good,
He seems an Alpine wind, two hills between,
That in the month of March shakes leafy wood;
Which to the ground now bends the forest green,
Now whirls the broken boughs, at random strewed.
Although the prince wards many, in the end
One mighty stroke he cannot scape or fend.

LXIV.

In the end he cannot scape one downright blow,
Which enters, between sword and shield, his breast.
As perfect was the plate and corslet, so
Thick was the steel wherein his paunch was drest:
But the destructive weapon, falling low,
Equally opened either iron vest;
And cleft whate'er it swept in its descent,
And to the saddle-bow, through cuirass, went.

LXV.

And, but that somewhat short the blow descends,
It would Zerbino like a cane divide;
But him so little in the quick offends,
This scarce beyond the skin is scarified.
More than a span in length the wound extends;
Of little depth: of blood a tepid tide
To his feet descending, with a crimson line,
Stains the bright arms which on the warrior shine.

LXVI.

'Tis so, I sometimes have been wont to view
A hand, more white than alabaster, part
The silver cloth, with ribbon red of hue;
A hand I often feel divide my heart[6].
Here little vantage young Zerbino drew
From strength and greater daring, and from art;
For in the temper of his arms and might,
Too much the Tartar king excelled the knight.

LXVII.

The fearful stroke was mightier in show,
Than in effect, by which the Prince was prest;
So that poor Isabel, distraught with woe,
Felt her heart severed in her frozen breast.
The Scottish prince, all over in a glow,
With anger and resentment was possest,
And putting all his strength in either hand,
Smote full the Tartar's helmet with his brand.

LXVIII.

Almost on his steed's neck the Tartar fell,
Bent by the weighty blow Zerbino sped;
And, had the helmet been unfenced by spell,
The biting faulchion would have cleft his head.
The king, without delay, avenged him well,
"Nor I for you till other season," said,
"Will keep this gift;" and levelled at his crest,
Hoping to part Zerbino to the chest.

LXIX.

Zerbino, on the watch, whose eager eye
Waits on his wit, wheels quickly to the right;
But not withal so quickly, as to fly
The trenchant sword, which smote the shield outright,
And cleft from top to bottom equally;
Shearing the sleeve beneath it, and the knight
Smote on his arm; and next the harness rended,
And even to the champion's thigh descended.

LXX.

Zerbino, here and there, seeks every way
By which to wound, nor yet his end obtains;
For, while he smites upon that armour gay,
Not even a feeble dint the coat retains.
On the other hand, the Tartar in the fray
Such vantage o'er the Scottish prince obtains,
Him he has wounded in seven parts or eight,
And reft his shield and half his helmet's plate.

LXXI.

He ever wastes his blood; his energies
Fail, though he feels it not, as 't would appear;
Unharmed, the vigorous heart new force supplies
To the weak body of the cavalier.
His lady, during this, whose crimson dyes
Where chased by dread, to Doralice drew near,
And for the love of Heaven, the damsel wooed
To stop that evil and disastrous feud.

LXXII.

Doralice, who as courteous was as fair,
And ill-assured withal, how it would end,
Willingly granted Isabella's prayer,
And straight to truce and peace disposed her friend.
As well Zerbino, by the other's care,
Was brought his vengeful anger to suspend;
And, wending where she willed, the Scottish lord,
Left unachieved the adventure of the sword.

LXXIII.

Fair Flordelice, who ill maintained descries
The goodly sword of the unhappy count,
In secret grieves, and so laments the prize
Foregone, she weeps for rage, and smites her front:
She would move Brandimart to this emprize;
And, should she find him, and the fact recount,
Weens, for short season will the Tartar foe
Exulting in the ravished faulchion go.

LXXIV.

Seeking him morn and evening, but in vain,
Flordelice after Brandimart did fare;
And widely wandered from him, who again
Already had to Paris made repair.
So far the damsel pricked by hill and plain,
She reached the passage of a river, where
She saw the wretched count; but what befel
The Scottish prince, Zerbino, let me tell.

LXXV.

For to leave Durindana such misdeed
To him appeared, it past all other woes;
Though he could hardly sit upon his steed,
Through mighty loss of life-blood, which yet flows.
Now, when his anger and his heat secede,
After short interval, his anguish grows;
His anguish grows, with such impetuous pains,
He feels that life is ebbing from his veins.

LXXVI.

For weakness can the prince no further hie,
And so beside a fount is forced to stay:
Him to assist the pitying maid would try,
But knows not what to do, nor what to say.
For lack of comfort she beholds him die;
Since every city is too far away,
Where in this need she could resort to leech,
Whose succour she might purchase or beseech.

LXXVII.

She, blaming Fortune, and the cruel sky,
Can only utter fond complaints and vain.
"Why sank I not in ocean," (was her cry,)
"When first I reared my sail upon the main?"
Zerbino, who on her his languid eye
Had fixt, as she bemoaned her, felt more pain
Than that enduring and strong anguish bred,
Through which the suffering youth was well-nigh dead.

LXXVIII.

" So be thou pleased, my heart," (Zerbino cried,)
" To love me yet, when I am dead and gone,
" As to abandon thee without a guide,
" And not to die, distresses me alone.
" For did it me in place secure betide
" To end my days, this earthly journey done,
" I cheerful, and content, and fully blest
" Would die, since I should die upon thy breast.

LXXIX.

" But since to abandon thee, to whom a prize
" I know not, my sad fate compels, I swear,
" My Isabella, by that mouth, those eyes,
" By what enchained me first, that lovely hair;
" My spirit, troubled and despairing, hies
" Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom; where
" To think, thou wert abandoned so by me,
" Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be."

LXXX.

At this the sorrowing Isabel, declining
Her mournful face, which with her tears o'erflows,
Towards the sufferer, and her mouth conjoining
To her Zerbino's, languid as a rose;
Rose gathered out of season, and which, pining
Fades where it on the shadowy hedgerow grows,
Exclaims, " Without me think not so, my heart,
" On this your last, long, journey to depart.

LXXXI.

" Of this, my heart, conceive not any fear,
" For I will follow thee to heaven or hell;
" It fits our souls together quit this sphere,
" Together go, for aye together dwell.
" No sooner closed thine eyelids shall appear
" Than either me internal grief will quell,
" Or, has it not such power, I here protest,
" I with this sword to-day will pierce my breast.

LXXXII.

" I of our bodies cherish hope not light,
" That they shall have a happier fate when dead:
" Together to entomb them, may some wight,
" Haply by pity moved, be hither led."
She the poor remnants of his vital sprite
Went on collecting, as these words she said;
And while yet aught remains, with mournful lips,
The last faint breath of life devoutly sips.

LXXXIII.

'Twas here his feeble voice Zerbino manned,
Crying, " My deity, I beg and pray,
" By that love witnessed, when thy father's land
" Thou quittedst for my sake; and, if I may
" In any thing command thee, I command,
" That, with God's pleasure, thou live-out thy day;
" Nor ever banish from thy memory,
" That, well as man can love, have I loved thee.

LXXXIV.

" God haply will provide thee with good aid,
" To free thee from each churlish deed I fear;
" As, when in the dark cavern thou wast stayed,
" He sent, to rescue thee, Anglante's peer;
" So he (grammercy!) succoured thee dismaid
" At sea, and from the wicked Biscayneer.
" And, if thou must choose death, in place of worse,
" Then only choose it, as a lesser curse."

LXXXV.

I think not these last words of Scotland's knight
Were so exprest, that he was understood:
With these, he finished, like a feeble light,
Which needs supply of wax, or other food.
—Who is there, that has power to tell aright
The gentle Isabella's doleful mood?
When stiff, her loved Zerbino, with pale face,
And cold as ice, remained in her embrace.

LXXXVI.

On the ensanguined corse, in sorrow drowned,
The damsel throws herself, in her despair,
And shrieks so loud that wood and plain resound
For many miles about; nor does she spare
Bosom or cheek; but still, with cruel wound,
One and the other smites the afflicted fair;
And wrongs her curling locks of golden grain,
Aye calling on the well-loved youth in vain.

LXXXVII.

She with such rage, such fury, was possest,
That, in her transport, she Zerbino's glaive
Would easily have turned against her breast,
Ill keeping the command her lover gave;
But that a hermit, from his neighbouring rest,
Accustomed oft to seek the fountain-wave,
His flagon at the cooling stream to fill,
Opposed him to the damsel's evil will.

LXXXVIII.

The reverend father, who with natural sense
Abundant goodness happily combined,
And, with ensamples fraught and eloquence,
Was full of charity towards mankind,
With efficacious reasons her did fence,
And to endurance Isabel inclined;
Placing, from ancient Testament and new,
Women, as in a mirror, for her view.

LXXXIX.

The holy man next made the damsel see,
That save in God there was no true content,
And proved all other hope was transitory,
Fleeting, of little worth, and quickly spent;
And urged withal so earnestly his plea,
He changed her ill and obstinate intent;
And made her, for the rest of life, desire
To live devoted to her heavenly sire.

XC.

Not that she would her mighty love forbear,
For her dead lord, nor yet his relics slight;
These, did she halt or journey, every where
Would Isabel have with her, day and night.
The hermit therefore seconding her care,
Who, for his age, was sound and full of might,
They on his mournful horse Zerbino placed,
And traversed many a day that woodland waste.

XCI.

The cautious elder would not bear away
Thus all alone with him that damsel bland
Thither, where in a cave, concealed from day,
His solitary cell hard by did stand:
Within himself exclaiming; "I convey
"With peril fire and fuel in one hand."
Nor in such bold experiment the sage
Wisely would trust to prudence or to age.

XCII.

He thought to bear her to Provence, where, near
The city of Marseilles a borough stood,
Which had a sumptuous monastery; here
Of ladies was a holy sisterhood;
And, hither to transport the cavalier,
They stowed his body in a chest of wood,
Made in a town by the way-side; and which
Was long and roomy, and well closed with pitch[8].

XCIII.

So, compassing a mighty round, they fare
Through wildest parts, for many and many a day;
Because, the war extending every where,
They seek to hide themselves as best they may:
At length a cavalier arrests the pair,
That with foul scorn and outrage bars their way;
Of whom you more in fitting time shall learn,
But to the Tartar king I now return.

XCIV.

After the fight between the two* was done,
Already told by me, the king withdrew
To a cooling shade and river from the sun,
His horse's reins and saddle to undo;
Letting the courser at his pleasure run,
Browsing the tender grass the pasture through:
But he reposed short time ere he descried
An errant knight descend the mountain's side.

XCV.

Him Doralice, as soon as he his front
Uplifted, knew; and showed him to her knight:
Saying; "Behold! the haughty Rodomont,
"Unless the distance has deceived my sight.
"To combat with thee, he descends the mount:
"Now it behoves thee put forth all thy might.
"To lose me, his betrothed, a mighty cross
"The monarch deems, and comes to venge his loss."

* Mandricardo and Rodomont.

XCVI.

As a good hawk, who duck or woodcock shy,
Partridge or pigeon, or such other prey,
Seeing towards her from a distance fly,
Raises her head, and shows her blithe and gay;
So Mandricardo, in security
Of crushing Rodomont in that affray,
Gladly his courser seized, bestrode the seat,
Reined him, and in the stirrups fixt his feet.

XCVII.

When the two hostile warriors were so near,
That words could be exchanged between the twain,
Loudly began the monarch of Argièr
To threat with head and hand, in haughty strain,
'That to repentance he will bring the peer
'Who lightly for a pleasure, rash and vain,
'Had scrupled not his anger to excite
'Who dearly will the offered scorn requite.'

XCVIII.

When Mandricardo: "He but vainly tries
"To fright, who threatens *me*—by words unscared.
"Woman, or child, or him he terrifies?,
"Witless of warfare; not me, who regard
"With more delight than rest, which others prize,
"The stirring battle; and who am prepared
"My foeman in the lists or field to meet;
"Armed or unarmed, on horse or on my feet."

XCIX.

They pass to outrage, shout, and ire, unsheath
The brand; and loudly smites each cruel foe;
Like winds, which scarce at first appear to breathe,
Next shake the oak and ash-tree as they blow;
Then to the skies upwhirl the dusty wreath,
Then level forests, and lay houses low,
And bear the storm abroad, o'er land and main,
By which the flocks in greenwood-holt are slain.

C.

Of those two infidels, unmatched in worth,
The valiant heart and strength, which thus exceed,
To such a warfare and such blows give birth,
As suits with warriors of so bold a seed.
At the loud sound and horrid, trembles earth,
When the swords cross; and to the stroke succeed
Quick sparks; or rather, flashing to the sky,
Bright flames by thousands and by thousands fly.

CI.

Without once gathering breath, without repose,
The champions one another still assail;
Striving, now here, now there, with deadly blows,
To rive the plate, or penetrate the mail.
Nor this one gains, nor the other ground foregoes;
But, as if girded in by fosse or pale,
Or, as too dearly sold they deem an inch,
Ne'er from their close and narrow circle flinch.

CII.

Mid thousand blows, so, with two-handed swing,
On his foe's forehead smote the Tartar knight,
He made him see, revolving in a ring,
Myriads of fiery balls and sparks of light.
The croupe, with head reversed, the Sarzan king
Now smote, as if deprived of all his might,
The stirrups lost; and in her sight, so well
Beloved, appeared about to quit the sell.

CIII.

But as steel arbalest that 's loaded sore,
By how much is the engine charged and strained,
By lever or by crane, with so much more
Fury returns, its ancient bent regained,
And, in discharging its destructive store,
Inflicts worse evil than itself sustained;
So rose that African with ready blade,
And straight with double force the stroke repaid.

CIV.

Rodomont smites, and in the very place
Where *he* was smit, the Tartar in return;
But cannot wound the Sarzan in the face,
Because his Trojan arms the weapon turn;
Yet so astounds, he leaves him not in case,
If it be morn or evening to discern.
Rodomont stopt not, but in fury sped
A second blow, still aiming at his head.

CV.

King Mandricardo's courser, who abhorred
The whistling of the steel which round him flew,
Saved, with sore mischief to himself, his lord;
In that he backed the faulchion to eschew:
Aimed at his master, not at him, the sword
Smote him across the head, and cleft it through.
No Trojan helm defends the wretched horse,
Like Mandricardo, and he dies parforce.

CVI.

He falls, and Mandricardo on the plain
No more astound, slides down upon his feet,
And whirls his sword; to see his courser slain
He storms all over fired with angry heat.
At him the Sarzan monarch drives amain;
Who stands as firm as rock which billows beat.
And so it happened, that the courser good
Fell in the charge, while fast the footman stood.

CVII.

The African, who feels his horse give way,
The stirrups quits, and lightly from the sell
Is freed, and springs on earth: for the assay
Hence matched anew, stands either infidel.
Worse than before the battle boils, while they
With pride and anger, and with hatred swell,
About to close; but that, with flowing rein,
A messenger arrives to part the twain.

CVIII.

A messenger arrives, that from the Moor,
With many others, news through France conveyed;
Who word to simple knight and captain bore,
'To join the troops, beneath their flags arrayed.
'For he, the emperor, who the lilies wore,
'Siege to their quarters had already laid;
'And, save quick succour thither was addrest,
'He read, their army's scathe was manifest.'

CIX.

The Moorish messenger not only knows,
By ensigns and by vest, the warlike pair,
But by the circling blades, and furious blows,
With which no other hands could wound the air;
Hence dared not 'twixt the champions interpose,
Nor deemed his orders an assurance were
From such impetuous fury, nor the saw,
Which says embassadors are safe by law:

CX.

But to fair Doralice approached, and said,
'Marsilius, Agramant, and Stordilane,
'Within weak works, with scanty troops to aid,
'Were close beleaguered by the Christian train.'
And, having told his tale, the damsel prayed,
That this she to the warriors would explain;
And would accord the pair, and to their post
Dispatch, for rescue of the Moorish host.

CXI.

The lady, with bold heart, 'twixt either foe
'Threw herself, and exclaimed; "I you command,
"By the large love you bear me, as I know,
"That you to better use reserve the brand;
"And that you instantly in succour go
"Of our host, menaced by the Christian band;
"Which now, besieged within its camp, attends
"Ruin or speedy succour from its friends."

CXII.

The messenger rehearsed, when she had done,
Fully the peril of the paynim train;
And said, 'that he bore letters to the son
'Of Ulien, from the son of King Troyane.'
The message ended, every grudge foregone,
'Twas finally resolved between the twain,
They should conclude a truce, and till the day
The Moorish siege was raised, their strife delay.

CXIII.

Intending, when from siege their Chivalry
Shall be relieved—the one and the other knight—
No longer to remain in company,
But bandy cruel war with fell despite,
Until determined by their arms shall be
To whom the royal dame belongs of right.
And she, between whose hands their solemn troth
They plighted, was security for both [10].

CXIV.

DISCORD, at hearing this, impatient grew;
With any truce or treaty ill content:
And that such fair agreement should ensue,
PRIDE, who was present, could as ill consent:
But LOVE was there, more puissant than the two,
Equalled of none in lofty hardiment;
And launching from his bow his shafts of proof,
With these, made PRIDE and DISCORD stand aloof.

CXV.

To keep the truce the rival warriors swore;
Since so it pleased her well, who either swayed.
One of their coursers lacked: for on the moor
Lifeless King Mandricardo's had been laid:
Hence, thither, in good time, came Brigliador,
Who, feeding, by the river's margin strayed.
But here I find me at my canto's end;
So, with your licence, shall the tale suspend.

NOTES TO CANTO XXIV.

1.

But from one source
All issue, though they lead a different way.
He is as 'twere a forest, where parforce
Who enter its recesses go astray;
And here and there pursue their devious course, &c.
Stanza ii. lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Velut sylvis, ubi passim
Palantes error certo de tramite pellit.
Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit. Unus utrique
Error; sed variis illudit partibus.
HORACE.

2.

Here acorns undistinguishing from bread.
Stanza xii. line 5.

The sweet acorns, among which is that of the ilex, are a common article of food with the peasantry in some parts of southern Europe; and the reader will recollect the letter of the duchess in Don Quixote to Sancho's wife, desiring a supply. It was this which led the poets to suppose them the exclusive food of man during the golden age. They are not after all so bad a substitute for something better, as might be conceived; and the mountain peasantry of warm countries (to their praise be it

spoken!) will accommodate themselves to worse provision. The inhabitants of the Tuscan Apennines make the fruit of a *wild chesnut* (I am not sure that it is the same as our horse chesnut) and ground pulse into bread; and the traveller, in a season of scarcity, may find beech leaves boiling in their pots, as an esculent vegetable.

3.

And deemed he was her lover and her lord
Who pricked beside the lady, fair of hue, &c.
Stanza xviii. lines 3 and 4.

They only *conjectured* respecting Zerbino, because his vizor, as he was armed, may be supposed to have been lowered.

4.

The faithless man alighted, and down fell
Upon his bended knees, &c.
Stanza xxx. lines 1 and 2.

Ariosto forgets that he is making Odorico do what he said Zerbino could not do (and what he would have done if he could) though precisely in the same situation; to wit, when bound upon a sorry hackney, the ordinary conveyance of malefactors. This and some other similar inadvertencies may seem to make against the care and precision, for which I have given the poet credit. But it is in his pictures of passion and manners, and in the general conduct of his story, that these are conspicuous. In mere facts, upon which nothing seems to depend, he is *sometimes* careless or forgetful. This must not, however, mislead the translator into the omission or alteration of trivial circumstances, upon which nothing seems *immediately* to depend; for something will often, hereafter, be found to hang upon such small threads. When I began my version of the Furioso, I occasionally made omissions or substitutions, which, I thought, did very well in their place; but which I found in-

appropriate in some after, and perhaps very distant, resumption of the story. The result of this experiment led me to adopt my present mode of close translation, and convinced me that though a single canto may be best rendered by a free version, a fair idea of the whole poem can only be given by a close translation, for the simple reason, that what is perhaps an equivalent for Ariosto's meaning in one place, is often no longer so in another.

5.

Nor first I make the faulchion mine to-day.

Stanza lix. line 2.

He means that he had established his claim to it, when he won the other arms of Hector in the castle of the Syrian fairy; as related in the Innamorato.

6.

'Tis so, I sometimes have been wont to view
A hand, more white than alubaster, part
The silver cloth, with ribbon red of hue;
A hand I often feel divide my heart.

Stanzas lxvi. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

Ariosto is indebted for this simile to Homer; who, describing a wound received by Menelaus, likens the blood flowing down to his feet to the crimson stain infused by damsels upon ivory, in working some ornament of a bridle. But here, as in other cases, Ariosto has put his own stamp upon what he has appropriated, and by the touch of tender gallantry with which he has graced it, made the illustration more especially congenial to the character of his poem. The *crimson ribbon*, representing a line of blood, is metamorphosed by Mr. Hoole into a *silken floweret*. The original is,

Così tal' ora un bel purpureo nastro
Ho veduto partir tela d'argento

Da quella bianca man più ch' alabastro,
Da cui partire il cor spesso mi sento.

Mr. Hoole's translation is,

So have I seen a *silken floweret* spread,
And dye the silver vest with blushing red,
Wrought by her snowy hand, with matchless art,
That hand *whose whiteness* oft has pierced my heart.

The figure of a mistress dividing her lover's heart is common in the Italian poets. So Dante says,

'Mi reca quella *che m' ha il cor diviso.*'

And I will not pass by another Italian poet's imitation of Homer's simile; though I think it is, generally speaking, as much without the limits of a commentator's duties to point out passages in which posterior writers have followed his author, as it is incidental to them to show where his author has imitated his predecessors. Tasso says, in his *Gerusalemme,*

Fù levissima la piaga; e i biondi crini
Rosseggiaron così d' alquante stille,
Come rosseggia l'or, che di rubini
Per man d' industre artefice sfaville.

CANTO III. Stanza XXX.

I cite these lines as illustrative of the process of the Italian poets, who appear to have proceeded upon the principles of the Grecian artists. These strove at perfection rather than originality, and always worked after the same model. It is the same *Jupiter* and the same *Medusa,* however multiplied, which meet us at every turn in every gallery or museum; and it is probably to this modest and undeviating spirit of imitation that we owe the perfection of ancient art. To the same zealous (though less servile) imitation of their predecessors (as I have already hinted) we perhaps owe the superior execution of the Italian poets.

7.

My spirit, troubled and despairing, hies
Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom; where
To think thou wert abandoned so by me,
Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be.

Stanza lxxix. lines 5, 6, 7, 8.

Having first destined Zerbino's soul for the myrtle-grove appropriated to departed lovers—

Quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit
Secreti celant calles et myrtea circum
Sylva tegit—

Ariosto makes him anticipate his descent into a *penal* hell. Why, except for the purpose of justifying this ardent profession of love, it is difficult to understand. If he had been a Moor, the doctrines of every Christian, in our poet's age, would, I believe, have assigned him such a hereafter; but he was a Christian prince, and is only known to us for his many virtues, and for being as amiable as he is virtuous. As odd as the supposed sentence past upon him, is his supposed foppishness, which is traditional in Italy, where *Zerbinotto* is as universally received an equivalent for a *dandy* as *Gradasso* for a *bully*. But nothing is to be found in justification of this scandal, that I am aware of, either in this work or elsewhere.

8.

Where near
The city of Marseilles a BOROUGH *stood,*
Which had a sumptuous monastery.
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Made in a TOWN *by the way-side, and which*
Was long and roomy, and well closed with pitch.

Stanza xcii. lines 1, 2, 3, 7, 8.

. . . . . .

Non lontano a Marsiglia in un *castello*,

Dove di sante donne un monastero
Ricchissimo era.

. . . . . .

c Che in un *castel*, ch' era tra via, si fece
Lunga e capace, e ben chiusa di pece.

If proofs were wanting, this stanza might well rank in additional confirmation of my version of a former passage. I imagine the explanation of the thing to be, that *castello* first signified a castle, then (old castles being seldom insulated) a castellated town, like Alnwick, Warwick, &c., and that the towns to which this term is in modern times applied were once castellated.

The circumstance of Isabella's carrying with her the dead body of Zerbino was suggested by the example of Joan of Castile.

9.

When Mandricardo: "*He but vainly tries*
" *To fright, who threatens me—by words unscared:*
" *Woman, or child, or him he terrifies,*
" *Witless of warfare,*" &c.
Stanza xcviii. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

Here we find a great resemblance to a speech of one of Homer's heroes, but the sentiments are so obvious, that the likeness may well be attributed to an accidental coincidence.

10.

And she, between whose hands their solemn troth
They plighted, was security for both.
Stanza cxiii. lines 7 and 8.

Mandricardo and Rodomont, in the spirit of gallantry, plighted their troth before Doralice, according to the forms observed before a feudal superior.

ERRATA.

Page 15, stanza xxxviii. line 7, for *Monodantes'*, read *Monodantes.*

230, after line 13, insert 5. as the number of the note.

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